



"Such letters as could only have been written by one 'chosen in the furnace of affliction'. Only the true spiritual will care for such a book. To me they have been a drink of the brook by the way. As in water face answereth unto face, so does our own experience answer to that of this gracious sufferer—though we blush when we mark his patience and our own haste to escape from disease."

C. H. SPURGEON

"A voice speaks from John Dickie's 'eight years' sick chamber, such as did from Elisha's sick chamber of old, to cheer on all God's bodily sufferers, and also all His active workers in their good fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil."

HENRY DYER

"Mr. Dickie's letters remind me of Samuel Rutherford's in the depth of their personal acquaintance with and joy in the Lord; and I can only desire that they may attain a wide circulation, and be greatly used of God in the edifying and sanctifying of His people. Their effect on me every time I take them up is to humble me in the dust, and yet to draw me towards the One who is their theme throughout."

JOHN R. CALDWELL







WORDS  
OF  
FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.



WORDS  
OF  
FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE,

FROM THE CHAMBER OF A DYING SAINT:

BEING A  
Series of Letters

WRITTEN BY  
THE LATE JOHN DICKIE, OF IRVINE, SCOTLAND,  
DURING HIS LAST ILLNESS,  
TO HIS FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,  
JAMES TODD, DUBLIN.

---

"He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities"—  
2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

---

October, 1987  
Published by  
GOSPEL TRACT PUBLICATIONS  
411 Hillington Road, Glasgow G52 4BL, Scotland

First Edition 1900

ISBN 0 948417 15 3

Printed by  
GOSPEL TRACT PUBLICATIONS  
411 Hillington Road, Glasgow, Scotland G52 4BL

PREFACE;  
WITH  
SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND LIFE-WORK OF  
MR. JOHN DICKIE.

---

I THINK it is right that I should at once state my reason for publishing the letters contained in this small volume. They were written to me, during his last illness, which extended for a period of about eight years, by a much esteemed and beloved brother in Christ, Mr. John Dickie, with whom it was my privilege to be acquainted for over thirty years.

During these eight years of illness, his sufferings were very great; much pain, constant sickness, excessive weakness and sleeplessness were his portion; together with a nervous irritability of the brain, which prevented him, absolutely, from having intercourse with his fellows. He was thus completely shut out from the world, but shut in with

God, and the experiences which he gained of God's sustaining grace, while he submitted most gladly to His most holy and perfect will, filled his heart with joy ; and so, out of a full heart, he writes in these letters of the unspeakable goodness of his Heavenly Father to him. And this he does in such a way, that any afflicted believer, who reads them, may well be encouraged to count upon the same God of love and consolation for like grace. There are also so many precious, solemn, and practical truths scattered through them, that the thoughtful reader cannot fail to be instructed and edified. In the full belief that God will graciously use these letters for His own glory, and the profit and blessing of His children, they are now published.

The writer of them, Mr. John Dickie, was born in January, 1823, in Irvine, a small seaport town in Ayrshire, Scotland. His father, who carried on the business of a grocer, died when he was fifteen years of age ; his mother having died four years before. Thus he, and one sister, were left orphans at an early age. He was a delicate boy, of a sensitive temperament ; modest and retiring, but of a kind and warm-hearted disposition ; and as he advanced in years, became a favourite with his rela-



tives, and all with whom he came in contact. At an early age he developed studious habits, seeking to store his mind with useful knowledge; and he made such progress, that he was enabled, in the year 1841, by means of what he earned by teaching, to enter Glasgow University.

It was about this time that the great crisis in his life occurred. He became deeply anxious as to his spiritual condition; and his conscience being tender, he felt sin to be an intolerable burden, till, when between nineteen and twenty years of age, he was led to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his all-sufficient Saviour. Yet, even after this, his conflicts with sinful self and the wicked one, were many and severe, so much so, that at times he doubted whether he was really converted or not. He now began to get an insight into the utter deceitfulness of his heart; and he felt the absolute necessity to mortify all self-will, and yield himself entirely to God. The deep spiritual experiences which he thus early passed through, doubtless gave character to his after Christian life.

Having, with his whole heart, yielded himself to God, he felt that he was no longer his own, but the Lord's, and he resolved to consecrate his life to His service. He ardently desired to become a minister

of the Gospel, and to this end, after finishing his university career, he entered the Divinity Hall. But towards the close of his first session in the Hall, symptoms of pulmonary consumption began to manifest themselves, and during his second session his health completely failed. But his desire to live and labour for God was strong. He, therefore, sought the advice of the most eminent physicians in Glasgow, but their opinion was most unfavourable, in fact, he was given to understand that there was no hope. Under these trying circumstances he returned to Irvine; and with his sister entered into the grocery business, which had been carried on by their late father. This they continued for a few years. In the meantime Mr. Dickie's health did not improve, it rather grew worse; and for over two years his voice so completely failed, that he was able to communicate with his sister only by means of the dumb alphabet.

About this time, 1848, there was in London a distinguished specialist on chest diseases. This physician, Mr. Dickie, as a last resort to human skill, desired to consult. He, therefore, having acquired the means, ventured on, what was to him in his very weak state, the difficult journey to the

metropolis. He saw the physician. But his opinion was the same as that given by the home doctors. There was no hope held out to him that he would survive twelve months. He was, however, advised to "go home, and study his own health." Turning his back on the capital he said to himself "If it is God's will, notwithstanding this verdict, I shall survive; if not, His will be done." He declined henceforth medical advice and treatment, studied as well as he could his own constitution and ailment; adopted a system of dietetics which he believed suitable; and lived a life of extreme abstemiousness. This treatment was no doubt the means of prolonging a singularly useful life for a period of over forty years.

On his return to Irvine, he stayed with his brother-in-law for four or five years, during which time his health improved considerably, so much so indeed, that he thought he ought to be up and doing. He accordingly went to Cairnryan, as a teacher in the Free Church school; but his health again failing, he was compelled to return home.

After a short cessation from physical and mental labour, he found a sphere of much usefulness as a missionary in his native town. In this work he was maintained by John H. Watt, Esq., a very

godly merchant in Irvine, and a prominent member of a Baptist Church. His work, in which he was most zealous, was chiefly among the poor and intemperate. His reports, which were carefully written, and made regularly, evinced much practical earnest labour for the salvation of souls. Many of the incidents recorded were exceedingly interesting, especially those regarding the reclamation of the victims of intemperance.

In the year 1858 he removed to Kilmarnock, at the invitation of John Stewart, Esq., of that town, a Christian gentleman well known and respected throughout the west of Scotland for his uprightness and godliness, and as a devoted labourer in the Master's vineyard. Here Mr. Dickie continued his work for God; the same in character as that in Irvine. Very soon he became Mr. Stewart's most intimate friend, closely associated with him in Christian work; and their true friendship and brotherly love, which continued till death separated them here, was most edifying to behold. Their habit was to dine together, and then prayerfully study the Holy Scriptures. And Mr. Stewart in his hospitality often invited other Christians, who found these occasions seasons of much profit and refreshing from the presence of the Lord. It was

here, on the day he arrived in Kilmarnock, I became acquainted with Mr. Dickie. The friendship of Mr. Stewart I had had the privilege of enjoying from my youth. And I may say, that of the many mercies I have received from my gracious God, I count it not the least, that He permitted me to know, and become an intimate friend of these two devoted servants of His. My only regret is, that I did not profit more than I have done from their faithful ministry, and from being a daily witness of their holy living.

Mr. Dickie remained about twenty years in Kilmarnock. Never strong physically, often prostrated through weakness; and on two occasions, so utterly broken down was his health, that he had to return home to Irvine for a time. But undeterred by these things, he, with much patience, persevered in the work of the Lord; counting upon the sufficiency of His grace; and he was able most gladly to glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him, knowing, "that when he was weak, then was he strong." What results have followed his abundant labours, the day of the Lord will declare.

I remained in Kilmarnock for about eight years after Mr. Dickie took up his residence there,

During that period I had the privilege of seeing him frequently ; of enjoying his Christian friendship and love, which ever increased ; and of being in a small measure a fellow-labourer with him. His information on almost every subject was most extensive ; and being possessed of a very retentive memory, he was able vividly and readily to recall incidents with which he had long before become acquainted, and use them, together with the knowledge which he had acquired by observation and study, for the benefit of his fellow-men ; and this he did in the most unostentatious manner.

While in Kilmarnock, Mr. Dickie identified himself with a company of the Lord's people, gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, who met in Nelson Street, in a building erected and maintained by Mr. Stewart. This building was used on the week days for school purposes, and on the Sundays and week day evenings for meetings. Here Mr. Dickie ministered regularly in Word and doctrine ; exercising the gifts with which God had so graciously endowed him, both in preaching the Gospel, most simply, earnestly, and faithfully to the unconverted, and also in expounding the Scriptures, teaching and exhorting believers. Those who had the privilege of listening to the Word from his lips were much



profited, for God's blessing accompanied it. Sinners were, therefore, won to the Saviour ; the troubled and sorrowing were comforted ; and many believers were led to a deeper and more entire consecration in life and service. The principles adopted by Mr. Stewart, Mr. Dickie, and those associated with them, for conducting worship and edification meetings, were founded, they believed, on the Word of God. They met, simply as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, taking the Bible as their all-sufficient guide ; and any Christian, sound in doctrine, and consistent in life was heartily welcome to their fellowship. Their aim was to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with all them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." While, therefore, they valued the gathering together only to the Lord's name, and the simplicity of worship which they observed, they were not prevented from having fellowship with the Lord's servants, who did not see eye to eye with them in these matters, but they co-operated heartily with such, when their common purpose was the glory of God in the salvation of sinners, or the blessing of His people.

But, although Mr. Dickie was strongly of opinion that the Holy Spirit was the power of all true ministry, and that His aid should be prayerfully

sought ; and that in all assemblies of God's people His grace and guidance should be looked for, and not hindered ; he was also of opinion that the principle of open ministry was liable to great abuse ; he believed that there should be a recognition of those who were gifted of God to edify and comfort His people ; and that only those who were thus gifted and also instructed in the Word of Truth, should be permitted to minister. He had a most profound reverence for God, and for His Holy Word ; and shrank with pain from anything and everything approaching to irreverence or carelessness in dealing with Divine things, and particularly so if such were manifested in those, who occupied the place of teachers or preachers of the Word.

The Great Redemption was the theme which was constantly before his mind, and was perhaps the leading one in his ministry. But he dwelt not alone on the unspeakable blessings resulting to guilty sinners therefrom ; but also on that side of the subject which is so often, and to so large an extent, overlooked—namely, that all who are the subjects of it “ Are not their own, for they are bought with a price ; and therefore, they are to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit, which are God's.” On one occasion we were at a Bible

meeting together, when the important subject of "Giving to the Lord's work" was under consideration. Some present expressed the opinion that our giving might be regulated by the demand made under the law, and be limited to the tenth of our income. Mr. Dickie reminded those present of God's unspeakable gift to us. I came away from the meeting with him. He was much grieved. "James," he said, "did you ever hear anything like that? I hope you don't believe it! One-tenth to offer to the Lord, when the ten-tenths belong to Him. Did He not give Himself and all that He had, to purchase such poor worthless sinners as you and me, and redeem us unto God? And shall we withhold anything from Him, or count aught we have our own? As His purchased possession, all we are, and all we have, are His; and shall we 'rob God' by living unto ourselves, and using that which God has intrusted us with, as His stewards, on self-indulgence. We mistake the whole matter, if we consider that we have any separate interest apart from Christ. The one great purpose for which we, as God's children, are left in this world, is to please Him, and show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

And these truths which he meditated on, and taught to others, he practised himself. His whole life was characterised by unselfishness. Never did I know him to ask for anything for himself; but often have I known him to refuse absolutely to accept gifts, which kind hands and loving hearts would seek to press on him. And this he did, not for want of appreciation of the kindness and love thus shown, but for fear that if he received them, he might, by so doing, lessen the ability of these friends to supply the needs of others. "I need nothing," he would say, "nothing but more love to God, and more love to His people." One day he remarked to me, "A Christian can live without much expense, he does not require luxuries; in fact, he is better without them. It is the man of the world that requires these things. It takes very little to keep me; and I am often thankful that I can carry all my earthly possessions in my hand-bag. Nevertheless, I fare sumptuously every day, for I sit at the King's table; and am fed with the finest of the wheat." And in his work for the Lord, coming in contact with the poor and distressed, as he did daily, he not only ministered to them the Word of Life, but to the utmost of his ability he gave of his means for their temporal

relief, often denying himself necessities, or what others would consider such, that he might have the more "to give to him that needeth."

It was my privilege, sometimes, to accompany him in his visits to the sick and dying; and I shall ever remember the grace displayed by him on these occasions. God had evidently taught him many precious lessons, by means of his own bodily weakness, and among others, the power to enter into the fullest and deepest sympathy with the afflicted. To such he was most tenderly kind and thoughtful in regard to the smallest matters. He was quick to discern, if from some cause, the visit was inopportune, and as quick to apologise. And he was careful not to weary or burden those whose physical or mental condition made much speaking at a time undesirable. His skill in eliciting from the sufferer's own lips his or her state of mind, and spiritual need, was only equal to his skill in selecting from the Word of God the truth suited to meet the need. I never knew any one who could present the Gospel with such simplicity and clearness, yet with such firmness and energy. You felt that you were in the presence of one who thoroughly believed in the living power of God's Word; and who also truly loved the soul he was addressing. When the case

demanding it, he would speak strongly, seeking to awaken the conscience to a sense of sin, and of the judgment to come. But this was done with such tenderness and love, that conviction was brought to the most careless, that he sought their salvation and blessing.

And his labours among the dissipated and openly ungodly, as well as among the poor and sick, were not in vain. God enabled him to win many trophies of grace, and to pluck brands from the fire. Not the least remarkable of these was a blacksmith, named Philip Sharkey—a man most profane, a drunkard, and, at times, a terror to the neighbourhood where he resided. This man Mr. Dickie sought out, and after long, patient, and prayerful effort, he had the joy of winning him to trust in the Saviour. I, too, had the privilege of visiting him, and can therefore speak with certainty of the genuineness of his conversion, which caused quite a stir among his neighbours. He was spared for some time afterwards, and was truly a monument of God's saving grace. I visited him when he was on his death-bed, and witnessed his triumphant departure to be with his Saviour, whom he trusted and loved.

Mr. Dickie wrote an account of this very interest-



ing case, and sent it to a friend, who, having read it, was strongly of opinion that it ought to be printed and circulated, believing that it would be helpful to many. At first Mr. Dickie refused, saying that it was not worth publishing ; but, being pressed, he consented. The manuscript was therefore sent to the Religious Tract Society, London, and was printed by that Society ; it was also printed, subsequently, by Mr. Peter Drummond, Stirling, and by others. It was entitled "Philip Sharkey, the Kilmarnock Blacksmith." Its circulation was enormous. One gentleman alone purchased for distribution 100,000 copies. It was a great favourite of the late Professor Sir James Y. Simpson, who called it "My tract," and he distributed it by hundreds. Afterwards Mr. Dickie wrote a number of other tracts for the same Society. He also became a contributor to several religious periodicals, and in particular to the *Family Treasury*. Among his many contributions to this periodical was an interesting serial story, called "Oliver Underwood," bearing on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures ; also, "The Legend of the Golden Mouth," a serial treating of the life, labours, and times of Chrysostom. He had in the hands of Messrs. Nelson & Son a very important and elaborate work at the time

that the establishment of that great publishing firm was destroyed by fire, and in that fire his work was consumed. The loss he thus sustained was very great, for he had spent much time and labour on it; in a sense, he looked upon it as his life work. He, therefore, greatly regretted the loss, particularly so, as owing to physical weakness he was unable to reproduce it.

Besides his prose writings, Mr. Dickie wrote many poems and hymns; some of these were written in letters to friends, who had them printed. In the "Golden Grain" series of leaflets (poetry), published by Mr. James E. Hawkins, Welbeck Street, London, those bearing the signature "J. D." were written by him.

After enjoying the privilege of his friendship, and of fellowship with him in the Master's service for a number of years, I left Kilmarnock to reside in Ireland; but a regular correspondence was maintained between us until his departure to be with the Lord.

Many years ago, a Christian gentleman, residing in Dublin, was much struck by one of Mr. Dickie's contributions to the *Christian Treasury*, called "The Devil's Cradle," and he thought that it would be most desirable to have the solemn truths con-

tained in it brought before the minds of Christian young men. He therefore had the paper reprinted, in the form of a booklet, for gratuitous circulation. One of these booklets found its way into the hands of a Christian, to whom it was made a special blessing. Several years afterwards, I was brought into contact with this Christian friend, who, learning that I knew the author, and was also interested in the booklet, which was then nearly out of print, most kindly offered to have it again reprinted, provided that I would undertake to have it distributed gratuitously among Christians. To this I gladly consented. And since then, through this friend's liberality, over 100,000 copies have been sent to various parts of this and other lands; and I have received numbers of letters testifying to the blessing it has been made to many.

The gentleman mentioned above, on one occasion, asked me to request Mr. Dickie to write a paper specially for Christian young men. He refused, stating that he could not, as he never had been a young man, at least he never had a young man's experience; and, therefore, his knowledge of their special circumstances and needs was not sufficient to enable him to write anything suitable. Some time afterwards, he wrote me a long letter on the

subject of "Christian Thoroughness." Showing this letter to my friend, he said, "Why, this is what I wanted. Mr. Dickie, without knowing it, has written the very thing I desired." He, therefore, had 30,000 copies of it printed in the form of a small book, and sent them to the Young Men's Christian Associations throughout the kingdom, for distribution among the members. A number of other letters which he wrote me from time to time, were also printed as booklets—among them being "Divine Compensations," "The Christian Fear of God," "Hezekiah's Trial," "Stewardship," &c.

In the year 1878 Mr. Dickie became very feeble in health, and he, in consequence, left Kilmarnock, and returned again to Irvine, to reside with his dear sister. Here he remained till he fell asleep in Christ, being most tenderly cared for all the time, by his sister and her husband, Provost Watt, and their family. For a few years, after his return to his native town, he was enabled to go about, serving the Lord, though in much physical weakness; but in the year 1882 his little remnant of strength completely failed, and, for the remaining eight years of his life, he was confined wholly to his room; never being able to leave it again, but on one occa-

sion, in the summer of 1890, and that only for a few minutes. His utter weakness and sickness, together with his brain affection, hindered him absolutely from seeing any one, saving his immediate relatives, who ministered to him with all the kindness that affection could prompt. During these years I paid an annual visit to his home; but, for the first six of them, I could not see him. In August, 1889, however, and again in August, 1890, he being a little stronger, I had the great privilege of having short interviews with him. These two meetings, though they lasted but for a few minutes each, were most solemn. He was wasted to a skeleton, but his countenance bore evidence of the peace of God within. Taking my hands in his own, he said, with a voice tremulous from emotion, "James, this has been the happiest portion of my life. Most gladly would I pass through the same sufferings again, to experience the same rich seasons of communion with God, and the joy-giving presence of my Saviour. 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life,' and, oh, it is only the beginning, for 'I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'"

A few weeks after my last interview with him, he began to grow worse; fresh symptoms of disease

manifested themselves, and he gradually got weaker. For twenty days he could take nothing but a little water, until the 18th of January, 1891, at five o'clock in the morning, when the weary sufferer passed from his earthly tabernacle into the presence of his Lord.

His brother-in-law, Mr. Watt, in a letter to me, said :—

“Our dear brother has gone to his rest. I need not say anything to you of his patience during his long and painful illness, or of his cheerful submission to the will of his Heavenly Father. When the pangs of death were upon him, his eyes being closed, he was asked if he was sleeping. He replied, ‘Just musing on the sufferings of the Cross.’ And so, conscious to the last, he passed away from us. And I am sure that our household shall never forget our dear brother’s life, and the bright example he left for our imitation.”

He was interred on Wednesday, the 21st of January, 1891, in Irvine Churchyard, in the presence of a large number of friends. The service was conducted by the Rev. R. S. Macaulay, Free Church minister, with whom, in the latter part of his life, Mr. Dickie had much happy Christian fellowship.

After his decease, there was found, among his papers, a form of solemn consecration, written and



signed by him. Mr. Watt kindly sent me a copy of it. And as it shows the spirit which animated him through life, and how entirely he yielded himself up to God, it is printed on page xxvii. May all who read it have grace to covet earnestly the same spirit of whole-hearted consecration.

I have already stated my object in publishing these letters. I would, however, add a few words. I have selected only those written to me from the commencement of my dear brother's last illness. Some of his letters, written prior to that, have been, as I mentioned before, already printed, and, if it be the Lord's will, the remainder may be also at a future time. But these now printed were written during the time the writer was in the furnace of affliction—when the Lord was dealing with His dear child in a way most painful to the flesh, but also in the tenderest love—effectually purging away the dross, leaving nothing but the pure gold. And how graciously He sustained His beloved servant, enabling him, even in the furnace, to “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” his letters fully disclose.

The personal allusions in them I would have gladly omitted, in fact I did omit many others; but these are retained, because they show the grace

and the unselfishness of my beloved friend, and how fully he appreciated the smallest act of kindness and of love. And, may I add, that should any reader find in them any defect in manner or style, will such kindly remember that most of the letters were written when the writer was suffering the extreme of both mental and physical prostration; and also, that they were by him never intended for publication?

The poetry was written by Mr. Dickie from time to time, and has appeared, as already mentioned, in the "Golden Grain" Leaflet Series. He occasionally enclosed one or more of the leaflets in his letters to me; and, as the spirit pervading them is so completely in harmony with his experiences as expressed in his letters, I venture to print them also.

And now I commend them to God, with the earnest prayer that He may use the words contained in the letters for the edification of His people, and especially for the comfort of those in affliction, making them words of life and blessing, so that through them, it may be said that "he being dead yet speaketh."

JAMES TODD.

## A LIVING SACRIFICE.

---

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF MR. JOHN DICKIE  
AFTER HIS DECEASE.

---

O LORD, my God, most holy and most gracious, encouraged by Thine invitations and promises, I desire now to approach Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to lay mine entire self, soul, body, and spirit, on Thine altar, a living sacrifice. Weary of all the forms and measures of the fallen life, I desire to live no longer to self, but altogether and exclusively to Thee. With all my heart I joyously recognise Thine infinite claims upon me ; and I hereby resign myself into Thy hands, to be for ever henceforward at Thine absolute disposal. I reserve nothing, but desire to be Thine alone, in all that I am, all that I possess, all that I can do ; and to be Thine for evermore.

Besides this unconditional surrender of my

entire self to Thee, I accept with equal heartiness, and in all its immense fulness, the gift of grace which Thou art bestowing freely on sinners, in Christ Jesus. With adoring joy and wonder, I come to Thee to be made partaker of the fellowship of Thy beloved Son. I would enter, even now, into the full enjoyment of all the new relationships with Thee which are involved in this fellowship; and I look to Thee in humble confidence to fulfil to me all Thy most gracious promises, and to deal with me as a loving father deals with a helpless but beloved child. And that I may be led, even now, into the enjoyment of the exceeding riches of Thy grace, I come to Thee to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to be constituted in fact His actual temple, and that for ever.

Earnestly do I beseech Thee, O my God and Father, to make this act of solemn consecration issue plentifully in the most blessed results. Do Thou be pleased to take action on it, and secure for Thyself the full possession of me as a redeemed and self-consecrated man. And do Thou equally take most gracious action on my solemn acceptance of Thy grace, as Thou seest me fitted to receive. And though I am conscious of the most grievous

imperfections in my making of this surrender and this acceptance, I pray Thee that these imperfections may not interfere with the efficaciousness of this solemn transaction. For the frank, full, free forgiveness of these and of all my sins, I look only to the precious atoning blood of the Lord Jesus.

And now, O my God and Father, do Thou graciously accept this imperfect consecration of myself to Thee, and do Thou enable me to act on it continually. Help me to live henceforward as becomes one who never ceases to realise his full relationship to Thee in Christ Jesus. I would keep back nothing from Thee, but would joyously expend mine all in the most hearty serving of Thy holy will, whatever may be the character of the service to which Thou pleasest to call me. And in my constantly recurring need, I would look to Thee for every seasonable help, counting always on Thy gracious and faithful response to the needy cry of Thy unworthy child. And that all this, the good pleasure of Thy goodness, may be fulfilled in me, I now heartily surrender into Thy holy hands the old self-life, to be subdued and brought to an end in whatever way and by whatever discipline Thou seest best to use. Let me live only in the

new life ; let me live, yet not I, but Christ in me.

In solemn avowal of all that I have written,  
I humbly append my name,

JOHN DICKIE.

*11th October, 1883,*

AGED 60 YEARS 9 MONTHS AND 2 DAYS.

Luke xi. 13 ; John vii. 37-39 ; John xiv. 12-14 ;  
Eph. v. 18 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16 ; vii. 1.

# CONTENTS.



PAGE

PREFACE ; WITH SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND LIFE-WORK	V
OF MR. JOHN DICKIE, . . . . .	V
A LIVING SACRIFICE, . . . . .	xxvii

LETTERS.

SUBJECT.

NO.

1. HE DAILY LOADETH US WITH BENEFITS, . . . . .	35
2. WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE, . . . . .	39
3. THE NEED OF SPECIAL DIVINE HELP, . . . . .	40
4. GOD'S LOVE THE ONLY TRUE LOVE, . . . . .	42
5. THE COMFORT OF BEING IN THE FATHER'S LOVING HANDS, . . . . .	44
6. HE VISITS ME AND FEASTS WITH ME, . . . . .	47
7. CHRIST'S OWN, . . . . .	48
8. A DAY'S MARCH NEARER HOME, . . . . .	51
9. THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL, . . . . .	53
10. THE LORD DELIGHTETH IN MERCY, . . . . .	56
11. A PATIENT IN THE LORD'S HANDS, . . . . .	57
12. WHAT CHRIST IS IN HIMSELF, . . . . .	61
13. THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT, . . . . .	64
14. LET HIM KISS ME WITH THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH, . . . . .	66
15. CERTAINLY, I WILL BE WITH THEE, . . . . .	69
16. THE GOLDEN AGE OF MY LIFE, . . . . .	72
17. WE ARE NOT OUR OWN, . . . . .	75



LETTERS. NO.	SUBJECT.	PAGE
18.	ANOTHER NEW YEAR, . . . . .	78
19.	NOTHING TO DRAW WITH, AND THE WELL IS DEEP, . . . . .	81
20.	ABOUNDING SIN, AND MUCH MORE ABOUNDING GRACE, . . . . .	85
21.	THE INFINITE HEART-LOVE OF THE INFINITE GOD, . . . . .	86
22.	ONLY ONE SOURCE OF JOY, . . . . .	89
23.	THE WORD OF GOD, AND THE ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, . . . . .	93
24.	DELIGHT THYSELF IN THE LORD, . . . . .	97
25.	PROMOTION IN THE LORD'S SERVICE, . . . . .	100
26.	THE WILL OF GOD, . . . . .	106
27.	THE CROSS OF CHRIST, . . . . .	109
28.	IN THY LAW DO I MEDITATE, . . . . .	113
29.	BUT NOW MINE EYE SEETH THEE, . . . . .	116
30.	THE INEXPRESSIBLE GOODNESS OF GOD, . . . . .	122
31.	TO PLEASE GOD AND NOTHING ELSE, . . . . .	124
32.	THE LORD IS VERY PITIFUL, . . . . .	127
33.	HE COMFORTS ME-ON EVERY SIDE, . . . . .	135
34.	ALL OUR JOY TO BE IN GOD ALONE, . . . . .	137
35.	THE LORD FULFILS HIS MAGNIFICENT PROMISES, . . . . .	138
36.	THE FATHER'S LOVE, . . . . .	140
37.	MY BELOVED IS MINE, AND I AM HIS, . . . . .	148
38.	LÀID TENDERLY IN HIS BOSOM, . . . . .	153
39.	GOD'S GOODNESS IN AFFLICTING, . . . . .	154
40.	FATHER, THY WILL BE DONE, . . . . .	157
41.	THE BELIEVER IS TO LOVE AS CHRIST LOVES, . . . . .	158
42.	BROTHERLY LOVE, . . . . .	161
43.	TRAINING FOR HEAVEN, . . . . .	164
44.	HANDFULS OF RICHEST MERCIES, . . . . .	166
45.	REQUISITES FOR ACCEPTABLE SERVICE, . . . . .	169
46.	MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE, . . . . .	173

# CONTENTS.

xxxiii

LETTERS. NO.	SUBJECT.	PAGE
47.	MARAH-WATERS TURNED INTO SWEETNESS, . . .	178
48.	BEING EDUCATED FOR SERVING GOD THROUGHOUT ETERNITY, . . . . .	181
49.	ENJOYING GOD, AND COMMUNION WITH HIM, . . .	186
50.	TOO LITTLE ALONE WITH GOD, . . . . .	190
51.	UNBELIEF THE CAUSE OF ALL UNHAPPINESS, . . .	194
52.	IT IS ALL LOVE, EQUALLY, WHETHER HE GIVES OR TAKES AWAY, . . . . .	196
53.	SAD FALL OF A ZEALOUS PROFESSOR, . . . . .	197
54.	TAKE HEED THAT THE LIGHT WHICH IS IN THEE BE NOT DARKNESS, . . . . .	203
55.	THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, . .	208
56.	GODLY CONFIDENCE AND SELF-DELUSION, . . . .	211
57.	HEREIN IS LOVE, . . . . .	216
58.	GOD'S WORD MANIFESTS HIMSELF, . . . . .	220
59.	COMMUNION WITH GOD, . . . . .	227
60.	TRUE LOVE IN THE SPIRIT, . . . . .	233
61.	OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, . . . . .	235
62.	SHADOWS AND REALITIES, . . . . .	242
63.	TRUST ALSO IN HIM, . . . . .	245
64.	A LIVING SACRIFICE, . . . . .	250
65.	THOU SHALT GUIDE ME WITH THY COUNSEL, . . .	254
66.	OUR GOD AND FATHER, . . . . .	259
67.	A GENUINE CHRISTIAN—HIS LIFE AND WALK, . .	265
68.	WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH, . . .	275
69.	O LORD, TRULY I AM THY BOND-SLAVE, . . . .	283
70.	WORK AND REST, . . . . .	292
71.	THE ONENESS OF CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER, . .	295
72.	KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL KEEPING, . . . . .	305
73.	CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, . . . .	307

LETTERS. NO.	SUBJECT.	PAGE
74.	GOD IS LOVE, . . . . .	319
75.	ONLY ONE GOOD WORTH SEEKING, . . . . .	323
76.	INTERCESSORY PRAYER, . . . . .	327
77.	JESUS ALONE CAN SATISFY, . . . . .	335
78.	AS MANY AS I LOVE I REBUKE AND CHASTEN, . . . . .	342
79.	A VERY BITTER CUP, AND HOW IT WAS MADE SWEET, . . . . .	351
80.	TO THEM THAT HAVE NO MIGHT HE INCREASETH STRENGTH, . . . . .	359
81.	FAREWELL, . . . . .	366

---

### POETRY.

LORD JESUS ! I BELONG TO THEE, . . . . .	46
O LORD, TRULY I AM THY SERVANT, . . . . .	77
THE SERVICE OF PATIENCE, . . . . .	104
JESUS, SAVIOUR, THOU ART MINE, . . . . .	121
THE INVALID'S LOWLY SERVICE, . . . . .	136
A LOWLY LIFE-PSALM, . . . . .	146
COMMUNION, . . . . .	163
MY HIDING-PLACE, . . . . .	179
ONLY THE SINNER FINDS THE SAVIOUR, . . . . .	201
MERCY IS FREE, . . . . .	226
YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY ; OR, JESUS ONLY, . . . . .	248
OH NO, I AM NOT DESOLATE, . . . . .	263
THE GARMENT OF PRAISE, . . . . .	303
PERFECT IN BEAUTY, . . . . .	318
IMPORTUNITY, . . . . .	334
WHY WEEPEST THOU ? . . . . .	350
THE DYING SAINT, . . . . .	368

# WORDS OF FAITH.

---

## Letter No. 1.

“HE DAILY LOADETH US WITH BENEFITS.”

January, 1883.

MY EVER DEAR BROTHER,—To-day is rather a noticeable day with me. It is sixty years since I first drew breath in this world of sin and sorrow. I had never thought of reaching such a patriarchal age. To most, it seems no great age; but to me it certainly is. Between 1843 and 1853, under sore illness, I spent at least thirty years of constitution in ten years of time, and so, while I am only sixty by the registrar's books, I am physically eighty years old at the least.

And how much Divine mercy have you and I seen in the past years of our lives? Loads of it; positive back-burdens of it (Ps. lxviii. 19). Mercy on the back of mercy; nothing else, in

fact, but mercy. And now, in the spirit of a self-emptying pilgrim, I desire to wait patiently for the final mercy here—the permission to lay aside this body of sin and death. And we expect eternity to be filled with the marvellous display of mercies of the most astounding magnitude (Eph. ii. 7).

And your winter is fast approaching ; and mine, dearly beloved, is fast breaking up. The signs of approaching spring are multiplying rapidly. “For, lo, the winter will soon be past, the rain over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” Yes, indeed ! and I see the flowers springing, with all their lovely colours and their sweet perfume, all around my bed ; while my lonely room, where human voice is rarely heard, is so filled with the “grave, sweet melody” of Heaven’s own songsters. O my brother, beloved ! I am so happy ; my race so nearly run ; the fight so nearly fought ; the painful, weary, trying course nearly finished, and the grand victory finally secured, not yet crowned, but the crown is ready and laid up, and will shortly be on my head, though meantime I have to sojourn for a brief space, like

Bunyan's pilgrims, on the margin of the separating river, and waiting in expectation daily, yea hourly, for the permission to pass over. And as they wait they are refreshed by the odours which the breezes bring from the Celestial City; and sometimes they can catch the faint murmurs of the distant music, while in the clear nights, they often see the glimmer of the city of lights. O my brother, may such a holy happy season be given to you and me increasingly to experience! I do firmly believe that we ought, yea, that we might, yea more, it is not only a grievous loss, but our great sin, that our life here has so little of heaven in it. What we want in order to make us capable of seeing Him, and of more fully enjoying communion with Him, and to make earth for us more like heaven, and to turn life here into a ministry within the Holy of Holies, is the clearer spiritual vision, and the more perfectly sanctified heart.

I find also in my own little experience, that one of the most essential elements of a truly happy life is an unlimited resignation of all one's concerns to the HOLY PERFECT will of God. It is a sovereign balm for every sorrow. No matter how severe the bodily pain may be, or how heavy may be the burden of one's sorrow, all the bitterness is taken out of it when once we resign ourselves absolutely

into our Heavenly Father's trusted hands, and ask Him to do with us, and for us, ONLY WHAT HE WILLS. Oh, what unspeakable relief. The burden falls off us instantly, the darkness flees away, the trouble ceases to trouble, when we, ceasing to desire either its continuance or its removal, seek only that God's will be perfectly done. For where can the bitterness or the suffering be, when our faith is strong enough and continuous enough to see that God has chosen, and is continuing to choose, all this for us, and chosen it too, in most tender Fatherly love and infinite wisdom. And it shall be very strange indeed if His presence now (which faith must realise)—that very presence which we expect shall be able, by itself, to fill up eternity for us with rapture—shall not be sufficient now to make us feel heaven already begun. I desire heartily to pass through my small remainder of pilgrimage "LEANING," as I have never leant, "on the Beloved," and if, in order to bring this about, it be indispensable that earth be turned into a ten-fold wilderness to me than it has ever been, then AMEN, let Christ be everything to me.

May God bless you, and bless your work, and bless your helpers.—With hearty love, ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 2.

"WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE."

March, 1883.

My ever dear Brother,—Thanks for your kind and welcome letter. I am moving along much as before. I am very frail indeed, and am very far short of what I was a few months ago. Of late I seem to be going back; and for the past few days, I have been as weak as I have been at all.

It is all just as it should be, since it is all the wise, and loving, and perfect will of God. I had a very sleepless night last night, but delightfully brightened with sweet and never-to-be-forgotten hours. Oh! the matchless, inconceivable love and grace of the meek and lowly Son of God, when He can stoop to visit, and to dwell with a most unworthy and sinful earth-worm, and kiss such an one with the very "kisses of His mouth." His "love is better than wine."

My thoughts cluster round the words of the Apostle in Acts xxvii. 23: "Whose I am, and whom I serve." What a most cheering thought, dear brother, that we belong to Jesus, are His *very* "OWN" (John xiii. 1); given to Him to be His own, by the Father (John xvii. 24); chosen by Him—

self (John xv. 16); purchased at the cost of His life (1 Cor. vi. 20); rescued by His power (Luke xi. 22; Gal. i. 4); and surrendered to Him by our own most hearty choice of Him, to be now, and for ever, our only Lord and portion. Oh! to be enabled to live daily and hourly as CHRIST'S OWN (Ps. xlv. 10, 11), and that the few more days left here may be spent in the humility, the faith, the love, and the loving devotedness of obedience that befits one like me. Good-bye, God bless you, dear brother.—Ever affectionately yours, J. DICKIE.

---

### Letter No. 3.

“THE NEED OF SPECIAL DIVINE HELP.”

18th March, 1883.

My ever dear Brother,—I received your kind letter on the 22nd ult., and need not say how heartily I fall in with your suggestions. I have been trying according to my best abilities, ever since, to carry out your proposal, but it will not work with me. I am weakly, and with a head all out of order. Do as I will, I cannot produce anything that it would be justifiable in me to send

you. It is at this time of year, generally, that I am weakest.

Since, then, it seems to be the will of God for the present, I scribble this hasty note to beg your *forgiveness*, and your forbearance. I would have written you long before, but until this afternoon I had hoped and meant to have a MS. to send you. But the subject is so immense, and moreover, I feel so deeply interested in it, that my poor worn-out brain refuses to grapple with it, and I sink down before the subject helpless and exhausted.

What I have scribbled I would not consent to see printed, for it is not weighed, and sifted, and prayed over, as it would need to be. For the subject requires much delicacy in the handling (as well as special Divine help), for one strong, rash statement might stumble a weak saint, or, on the other hand, might lull to a deeper sleep a secure sinner. I positively tremble at the thought of either.

Perhaps, then, you had better go on with your Conference, as proposed, and if it please the Lord to grant me a little revival of mental vigour, I shall ere long revert to it afresh. To-night I feel as if the Lord forbids me to go further.

The beloved Alexander Stewart has been taken home, and though quite expected, it has touched me very tenderly indeed. The Lord comfort his beloved mourners, and bless you.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 4.

“GOD’S LOVE THE ONLY TRUE LOVE.”

June, 1883.

My ever dear Brother,—I am in receipt of your kind letter, also parcel and books. Your kindness oppresses me, my brother; I know not how to thank you. Believe me when I tell you I need nothing, wish nothing, except indeed—

“More love to Thee, O Christ,  
More love to Thee;  
Hear Thou the prayer I make  
On bended knee;  
This is my earnest plea—  
More love to Thee, O Christ,  
More love to Thee.”

Kindly convey my most heartfelt thanks to my most kind, unknown benefactor. It will be a new enjoyment to me to remember her at the throne of grace, with other dear ones, to whom the Lord pleases to make me debtor.

Thank you very much for your precious verse, "My Grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9), and your comforting words upon it. The Lord pressed it so sweetly on my heart a month ago, and opened it up so richly to me that I am tempted to scribble a few more lines upon it, but forbear.

I did not know of the little book "Stewardship," I have no recollection of even writing it, your preface is far too flattering to me, and to it, while the reading of the little book itself lays me on my face before God, feeling a little of the spirit of Job, in chapter xlii. 6, and asking hopefully, for Christ's sake alone, the fullest measure of FREE GRACE that is needed by one who has been so unfaithful A STEWARD.

Could you spare me a very few copies. I would distribute them here, and also by the post.

I hope that when this reaches you it will find you in your usual health.

The Lord is good, good when He gives, and equally good when He takes away; and in reference to the experience of the past few months, I desire to praise equally, and with my whole heart, His taking as well as His giving hand; He never takes from us, but with the loving design of making us susceptible of receiving something better.

True love never feels that it has done, or can do too much for its beloved object. The renewed heart, therefore, never thinks of grudging to have God take from it what He pleases.

And still more. Since God's love is the only true love, the perfect love, He never feels that any thing is too good to give to the objects of His gracious regard, or too great for Him to do in their behalf. Oh, to trust Him UTTERLY, and to stop our ears to the ceaseless clamours of our sinful and rebellious hearts; He counts our very hairs, we are guarded by Him as the apple of His eye. As George Herbert sings—

“My God, Thou art all love.”

With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. D.



### Letter No. 5.

“THE COMFORT OF BEING IN THE FATHER'S LOVING  
HANDS.”

August, 1883.

My ever dear Brother,—I have been more feeble for two or three weeks—last week especially. The feeling of weakness is often extreme; and the nights are sometimes distressing. But I am greatly comforted in knowing that I am so entirely in my

Heavenly Father's loving hands, and that it is all according to His most holy and perfect will, who arranges it all in perfect love, and with a wisdom that does not, cannot err. No doubt this great weakness is needed, and He who is our gracious Physician, as well as our most tender Father, not only has lovingly ordered it, but is carefully and constantly watching over it until His purpose of grace has been fully accomplished; and I desire to welcome with joy His blessed will, and to kiss the most gracious hand which bruises me; He also comforts, indeed I might say, he does little else; even "as one whom his mother comforteth" (Isa. lxvi. 13).

Has not the Lord REDEEMED us to God by His blood—so fully redeemed us that there is not even a hair of our heads that is not included in the redeemed possession (Luke xxi. 18). So entirely redeemed us that not a hair of our heads is omitted from the inventory of the possession which he has purchased in purchasing us (Matt. x. 30). And is not our surrender of ourselves to Him meant by Him, and by us, to be as comprehensive, as all-inclusive; the whole spirit, soul, and body (not one hair omitted), laid on the holy altar, in absolute consecration (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20)? Not only *offered* to Him, but graciously ACCEPTED by



Him, and in no degree now to be thought of as under our own control.

Let us seek then to render unto God the things that are absolutely His.

Farewell for the present, dearly beloved brother, may Divine love comfort you and keep you.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours, J. D.

### LORD JESUS ! I BELONG TO THEE.

“O Lord, truly I am Thy servant ; I am Thy servant.”—Ps. cxvi. 16.

“I am Thine.”—Ps. cxix. 94.

“LORD, from the depths to Thee I cry,  
To Thee I lift my tear fill'd eye ;  
My Saviour ! let me *feel* Thee nigh ;  
Lord Jesus ! I belong to Thee.

“No home have I in this wild waste,  
O'er which with trembling steps I haste,  
The joys at Thy right hand to taste.  
Lord Jesus ! I belong to Thee.

“Yes, wholly Thine ; for Thou hast paid  
The claims which Justice on me made ;  
To buy my life, *Thine* low was laid.  
Lord Jesus ! I belong to Thee.

“Oh then, be Thou each hour my guide ;  
Ne'er let my faithless footsteps slide ;  
But keep me by Thy wounded side.  
Lord Jesus ! I belong to Thee.

“In dark temptation's trial-hour,  
When Satan bends his utmost power,  
My Saviour ! be my refuge-tower.  
Lord Jesus ! I belong to Thee.

“And if in grief tears fast should fall,  
 And gathering woes the soul appal,  
 May this sweet thought *full* peace recall :  
 Lord Jesus ! I belong to Thee.

“And should at length life’s pulses fail,  
 And weary feet tread death’s dim vale,  
 Breathe to my heart Thine oft told tale,  
 And whisper, ‘I BELONG TO THEE.’”

J. D.



### Letter No. 6.

“HE VISITS ME AND FEASTS WITH ME.”

September, 1883.

My ever dear Brother,—Thank you heartily for your kind letter. “We all do fade as a leaf,” and the only true life, is the life in Christ. May the most gracious God, deepen, strengthen, and perfect that life in us all, by our daily discipline. It is as you say a trial (to me it is) to be kept so completely apart, but it is THE HOLY WILL OF GOD. He has announced His will very clearly indeed on this, and some other points, and I would bow in adoring reverence to it. I can see no friends, can read very, very little, can write I may say none—or nearly so, can occupy my mind only in Divine communion, and that, too, in a small measure, and yet how inconceivably kind, and tenderly loving the Lord has been and is

to me! In the long dark hours of my sleepless nights, He visits me, and feasts with me (Rev. iii. 20) as He never did before. Never before was I so emptied of all that nature lawfully enjoyed, and never so happily filled. Never before so stripped bare, and never so loaded with benefits (Ps. lxxiii. 19); He has laid on me, as in Joel i. 7; while yet He has compensated more fully as in Habak. iii. 17, 18.

I have been a great deal weaker lately, indeed lying so constantly, and like a dead sack of corn, I have scarcely been able to stave off troublesome bed sores. But it is all the will of God, and I desire to delight in it.

Forgive all this paltry chatter about wretched self.—Ever yours affectionately, J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 7.

“CHRIST’S OWN.”

October, 1883.

My ever dear Brother,—Most hearty thanks for your kind letter, received this morning, and especially deep and heartfelt thanks to yourself, and to the other dear ones you named, for your gracious

remembrance of me at the throne of grace. May the Lord recompense your kindness into your own bosoms.

It is many weeks since I was laid down, and though in some respects a little better, in others I am not. No matter, God has a most wise and loving plan of His own, which He is carrying out, and that plan is absolutely perfect (Ps. xviii. 30); let Him fulfil in me all the good pleasure of His goodness (2 Thess. i. 11). Without being able to guess what His loving purpose with me may be I subscribe to it with all my heart beforehand my most cordial AMEN.

We are not our own, dear brother, we are now Christ's own. There is no one who has any interest in us like Christ's interest. We need not expect, then, indeed we should not wish, that He shall consult exclusively, or even consult at all, our old, sinful, renounced, fleshly interest in ourselves, indeed we too ought never to consult or even to consider it now. Let us leave Him to consult only His own interest in us, and when He does so, He is doing the best that can be done to secure our highest interests, and ours are not now separate but identical, and that for ever.

In some respects it has been a time of trial, but

it has been far more a time of blessing. I would not have missed the experiences of these last five months, no, not for the best five years I have ever had. But I must be very guarded in my words, for unless He who has been graciously sowing the seed take also special care to ripen it, I shall, if left to myself, even yet, spoil the crop.

*Friday.*—Having scribbled the preceding yesterday, I resume to-day. Have had a quieter night than I often have. Oh! how the most gracious God loads us with benefits (Ps. lxviii. 19). Our lives are filled with them, may He fill our hearts with loving gratitude, and our mouths with laughter (Ps. cxxvi. 2).

When God teaches us (and none of His mercies go beyond this) there are two astounding visions which he sets before us,—The sight of ourselves, and the sight of Himself.

I think, dear brother, He has been showing me of late more than I ever saw before of both these—Oh! how humbling is the one, how elevating is the other, how overwhelming are they both. Oh! the emptiness, and, oh! the fulness. Oh! the weakness, and baseness, and misery on the one hand; but, oh, the majesty, and glory, and blessedness beyond expression on the other! Nay, horrors

comprised in that wretched being, MYSELF, are as nothing, are obliterated, when viewed beside the unimagined grace and glory of the Infinite God. And (oh ! the joy) I am as deeply interested in the one vision as in the other. I have as much to do with God's fulness, as with my own emptiness ; with His majesty, as with my own meanness. If I have all that is in me to make and keep me most deeply humble, I have all that is in Christ to fill me with holy joy. Kindly give my love to the dear ones whom you name.—Ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 8.

“A DAY'S MARCH NEARER HOME.”

November, 1883.

Ever dear Brother,—Proof and letter are to hand, for both of which hearty thanks. You did excellently well to leave out what you thought to be better omitted. I am glad that you retain so much, and pray that the Lord may condescend to make use of the little thing. All well, all well ; every day is a “Day's march nearer Home.” The thought of *home*, as getting near at hand, grows very sweet to me. Let us joyously, lovingly, say “amen.”

to the holy, perfect, will of God (Ps. xviii. 30). This does not in the least hinder that we spread our desires humbly and reverently before Him in prayer, but it secures that we welcome His answer to these prayers, *WHATEVER it may be.*

Perfect peace is to be reached only through *perfect* faith and *perfect* patience—the faith and the patience which stand prepared for whatsoever it may please God to permit or to appoint. I am greatly struck by the degree of holy confidence in Ps. xli. 1, 2, 3 ; and if Jewish faith could soar so high, how calm and abiding should our rest of heart be !

Yes, as you say, poor Ireland is in a deplorable condition. Man is as unfit to roll back the curse of sin as ever he was, and though we may contrive to change, in some degree, the shape of the burden, the burden itself lies as heavily as ever on a groaning world, and there is no possible escape but one. May many sorely tried ones in Ireland find it to be a time of blessing, and may they turn their weeping eyes to Him, who indeed is never rightly seen at all, save through the looker's tears.—Ever yours in love,

J. DICKIE.





## Letter No. 9.

"THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL."

January, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—Hearty thanks for your kind letter, it was sweetly welcome to me, and did me good. The Scriptures you quoted suggested delightful thoughts, your simple warm words of kindly sympathy are full of comfort, for is not a Christian's love "love in the spirit," and is it not the next most precious thing to the Lord's own dear love? Nay, is it not at root the Lord's own love, the result of His dwelling in the heart by faith? (Eph. iii. 17).

And now I have to thank dear Mr. B——, and yourself for this present letter. Please convey to the beloved brother and accept for yourself assurances of my *heartfelt gratitude*. Lying so continuously I have been much tried by threatened bed sores. No doubt such appliances as you speak of, are on sale at Irvine, and I shall make enquiry after them if I feel I need them; most hearty thanks to you both all the same. Your large type Testament has been above all value to me these nine months past. I grudged at the time that you had been at the expense of it, but I had no thought of what a

precious treasure it was to be to me ; my whole heart thanks you fervently for it, but I must stop and leave this scribble, if God wills, to another day.

*Monday.*—I hope you have had a feast and a good day yesterday. The gracious Lord condescended to visit me in my solitude, but I could have taken more of His presence. To-day, His words, "That your joy may BE FULL," are sinking deep in my heart. He exhorts us to joy—to FULL joy. He aims at securing it in every way (John xv. 11 ; xvi. 24 ; xvii. 13 ; 1 John i. 4). Oh, let us open our hearts to the sanctifying influence, and seek a degree of joy in Jesus that is "UNSPEAKABLE" (1 Peter i. 8). Has He not given ample grounds for it? In Christ are we not God's own, His very *children*? We are dear to His heart as is the Lord Jesus, the Son of His eternal love ; He thinks on us by day, by night, without intermission, and all his thoughts are only and always thoughts of love (Jer. xxix. 11). His eye is over us continually, to watch our safety (Isa. xxvii. 3), as constantly as if He had nothing else to look after. His mighty arms are folded round us, protecting each of us as carefully as if we were the one and only treasure of His infinitely loving heart.

My soul, believest thou all this? if not, why dost thou profess faith, when thou dost not exercise it? and if thou dost believe it, believe it with a conviction that is stronger than the evidence of sight (Heb. xi. 1). How can thy joy but be abundant and perennial, as well as being purely and simply joy in Him—in Him, as being what He is in Himself, and as being what He is to thee; and if thou believest it, the joy-giving faith should dispel every groundless grief about the trifling sorrows of earth, and every foolish and tormenting fear, and should leave thee mainly the great grief that thou, so feebly respondest to love like God's; and to the great fear, lest thou shouldst dishonour Him or grieve His Holy Spirit (Eph. iv. 30).

But I must close, I can write but very little, and that little lying.

May the God of love bless you, my brother, as *He will do and is doing*; and may He guide and crown your labours.—I am, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

---

## Letter No. 10.

"THE LORD DELIGHTETH IN MERCY."

February, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—I know not how to express my indebtedness to yourself and to your most kind associates at this time.

Be pleased to express to dear Mr. B—— and the Earl of C—— my warmest and most heartfelt thanks, and receive the same for yourself. I can only commend you all to Him, who never overlooks a labour of love or work of faith.

I have not tried the soap, but shall do so, the Lord willing. The cushion fits *exactly*; it gives *great* relief, and the use of it will probably give time for the skin to mend.

But the material benefit is the smallest part of it; the gracious love that prompts the kindness is incomparably sweeter than any physical relief, and sweetest of all is the fact that the love is all for JESUS' SAKE.

O my brother, He is able not only to love me Himself (even ME—EVEN ME), but as if that did not satisfy the loving purposes of His most loving heart, He can stir up His children to feel kindly towards me—EVEN ME.

I can only look up with wonder from the depths (what deep depths of sinfulness and unworthiness, Ps. cxxx. 1), and cry :—

“ Why this profusion of Thy grace  
To such a worm as I ?  
Father, I ask, in fixed amaze,  
Explain this mystery.”

And the delightful explanation is this : “ The Lord DELIGHTETH IN MERCY ” (Micah vii. 18).—With much love, gratefully and affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 11.

“ A PATIENT IN THE LORD’S HANDS.”

16th May, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—I thank you with all my heart for your kind letter with the phial of collodion. You are very mindful of me; it is the Lord who puts it in your heart. I hope that your health keeps fairly able for your work, and that the candle of the Lord shines sweetly on your head.

You most kindly speak about sending me anything I need or desire. I know not how to find words to thank you; but in truth I need nothing, and desire nothing. A patient in the Lord’s hands, committed to Him, and undertaken by Him for

the effective treatment of my sore and inveterate spiritual maladies, I desire to lie passive before Him, and leave my entire case to His perfect wisdom and His infinite love.

And, oh, my brother, with what matchless love He deals with me. If I should attempt to declare and speak of it, all words fail.

I am certainly, on the whole, moving a little, but very slowly, in the direction of bodily improvement. Some of the severe symptoms are very gradually abating, others not a whit; but I shall not speak of these, for I grudge to fill up my little scribble with such matters. I would rather hear and speak of the infinite grace of my infinitely gracious Lord.

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” But I would like to correct a small mistake you make in your letter. You say you are reluctant to write me at all, and you make your letter as short as you are able, as you most kindly fear that your writing will tax me. Oh, no, my dear brother, any letter from you is a pleasure, and nothing else than only a pleasure, and it never taxes me in the slightest degree.

True, though my brain (considerably calmer now)

is still so very irritable that I cannot see friends (even my friend —— when he calls to ask for me, does not see me), yet this is not the case with a letter. I can read it without excitement and without injury, and it is a pleasant break in the monotony of my most solitary life.

And all my friends seem to have thought as you do, for they seldom write; but even this is the Lord's will, and is therefore welcome to me.

*Saturday.*—I had written so far yesterday, but had to leave off. And now we have entered on another day. Oh, my brother, may God help you and me to fill up all its hours with the most close and holy communion with Himself and service to His name. And we may each serve Him none the less that our spheres are different. You, He calls to *action*; me, to *patience*. May He help us to serve Him TRULY, and may He, this day, reveal Himself to us in Christ Jesus, as FULLY as we are able to bear it. I feel very unwell to-day, much more so than usual, and have had a poor night; but my God and Father has so arranged it, and I desire to welcome His will with gladness.

“Sovereign love appoints the measure,  
And the number of our pains;  
And is pleased when we find pleasure  
In the sorrows He ordains.”

*Lord's Day evening.*—I had to stop writing yesterday, I felt so poorly; I feel a little firmer to-day, and I think I am not misusing its sacred hours in scribbling a few sentences, designed to hold spiritual communion with my beloved brother, or in asking for him the Lord's rich blessing on his labours this day.

I have had a solemn and sweet day, thus far; solemn, for it is just FIFTY YEARS to-day since my beloved mother was taken to heaven, and I have been trying (as enabled) to keep it as an anniversary, humbling and refreshing my soul with recollections of the Lord's wonderful goodness to the poor motherless child. And it has been *sweet* as well as *solemn*, for I think the Lord has drawn near to me, and helped me to get somewhat nearer to Himself than sometimes I do.

O my brother, how inexpressibly sweet, but also how humbling it is to be enabled to enter truly into the secret place of the Most High!

We are made for this, and the new nature in us finds delight here, which it finds in nothing else.

The most common-place duty, when it is discharged IN THE LORD, fills the heart with a portion of the very blessedness of heaven. Suffering endured in fellowship with Christ, and in loving



acceptance of His most loving disposal of us, loses all bitterness, and becomes delightful :—"Sweet to lie passive in His hands and know no will but His."

And prayer—who can estimate worthily the joy of prayer, when He comes near and makes the communion genuine and close; nay, the very tears of penitential sorrow are delicious, and they help to intensify the rapture of that full and frank forgiveness which ever accompanies it. Oh, may you and I, my brother, be enabled increasingly to walk as Enoch did—with God.

Meanwhile with assurances of hearty love in the Lord,—I am, yours very affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.

*P.S.*—It is a year since the Lord laid me down and shut me up to solitude and Himself—blessed be His name for it all.



## Letter No. 12.

"WHAT CHRIST IS IN HIMSELF."

29th May, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—I received duly your parcel, and know not how to thank you for your most kind, most undeserved, and most considerate kind-

ness. Be satisfied, my kindest brother, about me. I NEED but little; and that little, the Lord never fails to provide.

Meantime, will you present my MOST GRATEFUL acknowledgments to the most kind hearted Christian lady who sent me, through you, the —— for whom, as also for you, it is a great enjoyment to me to ask that the Lord would return your kindness a thousand fold into your own bosoms.

I am glad to hear of your work. Dear Mr. P—— and yourself will both, I dare say, be much fagged; but a little season of rest is at hand. Oh, how sweet it is to work to weariness for the pleasing of such a Master! the Lord cheer you continually with the light of His bliss-giving smile; but not less sweet is it—NOT LESS SWEET, to lie in pain and weakness on His bosom, like a sick infant on its mother's breast, and do nothing but lie there when it is His dear will that one should so lie. Let Him choose for me HOW I shall serve Him; be mine the one aim of doing, or of bearing His will, in most perfect and joyous devotedness of all.

“One good I covet, and *that* ONE ALONE,  
To do Thy will, from selfish motives free;  
And to prefer a dungeon to a throne,  
And pain to comfort, when it pleases Thee.”

Friday, 30th May, 1884.

I have had a favourable night, and the Lord has given me some sweet little seasons with Himself during its quiet hours. O my brother, who can speak suitably of His condescending love? How joyous and how strong might we be at all times if we were always to realise, by an active faith, the things which we profess to believe. If we were constantly to realise, for instance, what Christ actually is in Himself. He is the Eternal and Almighty God—the Father's fellow, the Man in whom is all the fulness of the God-head bodily. Then, and with this, let us realise His relationship to ourselves. With all His infinite fulness He is God's free gift to us—a gift of infinite love—a gift which we have actually accepted ; and which therefore is in reality our very own. "My Beloved is mine and I am His." Let us realise too, the relationship into which Christ has actually brought us to the Father ; He has brought us nigh, laid us in His very bosom, as children—children beloved and delighted in ! Children, all whose interests are ceaselessly cared for and watched over. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye." And while the infinite love of the Son, our Great Intercessor, is so ready to ask on our behalf,

the infinite love of the Father is quite as ready to bestow. "Oh, why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?"

But my strength is worn out and I must pause.  
—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 13.

"THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT."

June, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—I am happy to see you are in Arran. I pray our most Gracious Father to use your quiet "rest a while" (Mark vi. 31), both to recruit your flagging body, and also to anoint your spirit with fresh and holy oil, through sweet and sanctifying communion with Himself.

I meant to have written to you earlier, but felt quite unfit. Yesterday, I could not think of touching a pen, and to-day, I am little better. Of late, I have been very feeble indeed. Since the New Year, it has been up and down with me—mostly down; but for the last month or six weeks, it has been all down, and for two weeks or more I have been frail to a degree I cannot express to you. The Lord seems to be lowering me down; but oh,

with what incomparable tenderness and gentleness He does it. "As one whom his mother comforteth" (Isa. lxvi. 13).

And His treatment of me is absolutely perfect—perfect in its adorable wisdom as well as in its astonishing grace. He patiently keeps before me the two great lessons which I so much need to learn, and which nevertheless I am so slow to take up. By continual repetitions of the lesson, He would train me not to trust in *myself* AT ALL, who am so fickle, so feeble, so unbelieving, so sinful, while by equally frequent repetitions of the lesson He would train me on the other hand to trust with ALL MY HEART in my faithful God, and to expect everything from His infinite grace in Christ Jesus.

I did not see you when you were here last summer. I had been hoping, if spared, to see you this summer; but now I doubt it very much—at least, I could not do so just now. Well, this is no matter, we shall soon meet elsewhere. In the meantime, there is something much sweeter than any mere *natural* enjoyment (such as seeing each other), and this is—to find *our deepest delight* in the most holy will of God. Our blessed Lord found the meat and the drink of His spirit there (John iv. 34). Let you and me ever aim at find-

ing ours there too. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Psalm xl. 8). But I must hastily close.  
—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 14.

"LET HIM KISS ME WITH THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH."

August, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—Hearty thanks for your most welcome letter—welcome for many reasons, and among others that it tells me how your health is. I rejoice to know that you are a little stronger. May the Lord perfect your restoration and replace you, not only in your beloved service, but also in your capacity to meet its claims. And indeed, He will do both, or He will do better still for you. Therefore wait in simplicity upon God, committing your all to His absolute disposal, and ready to welcome, with most joyous alacrity, whatever in His love and wisdom He appoints you.

And thank you, too, for the precious Scriptures you quote and the suggestions you make. They are all sweet and seasonable, and my heart responds to them most cordially. Oh, my brother, the Lord deals with astonishing graciousness to me, who am

in such an unusual degree so altogether unworthy of His goodness. But where sin abounds, it is even there where He makes His grace the more to abound (Rom. v. 20). He strikes me dumb (Ezek. xvi. 63) with the manifestations of His wonderful love in view of the deepening discoveries of my own unworthiness. I know not how to praise Him. Often, often in my long sleepless nights He fills my mouth with laughter and my heart with singing. Often, however, my brain is in such a condition that this is impossible. I can only lie trusting and peaceful at His feet, finding rest in the assurance that His blessed will is ever wise and loving.

O my brother, what sweet peace Jesus gives, perfect peace, Isa. xxvi. 3; peace like a river, Isa. xlvi. 18; peace that passeth *ALL understanding*, Phil. iv. 7; the very peace that filled the human soul of Christ Himself, John xiv. 27.

“Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?  
To bear the will of Jesus—this is rest.  
Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?  
On Jesu’s bosom nought but calm is found.  
It is enough; earth’s struggles soon shall cease,  
And Jesus call us to heaven’s perfect peace.”

I had to stop when I had written so far yesterday. The above represents an entire day’s writing. I have become much weaker of late, and am now

very weak indeed. It would be safe to say that my strength is not the one-tenth of what it was, say, three months ago. But I am quite strong enough; for I am as strong as God sees it best for me to be; and I desire His will, *all* His will, and nothing but His will. Our wonderful and most loving Father is arranging everything connected with us. **EVERYTHING.** And His arrangements are all the **VERY BEST.** We shall see this yet when we come to the land of light (Col. i. 12), and we shall rejoice in, and thank Him, for every one of them. Let our faith honour Him by so trusting His faithful love, that even now, without the seeing, we can heartily rejoice in everything He appoints to us, and thank Him for it. In fact we have nothing else whatever to do with the circumstances of our lot, except this; and along with it to seek to serve Him heartily amid these circumstances, casting from us with horror all our own self-willed desires, as actual rebellion against Him.

I trust the Lord is ever with you, my brother, and feeding you with the "finest of the wheat."

"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy love is better than wine;" I have been lifting up this as my prayer to Him, He has taught me, as I knew not before, how delightful His



“KISSES” are; and, foolish child, I would fain have too much of them!—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours in Him, J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 15.

“CERTAINLY, I WILL BE WITH THEE.”

September, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—With all my heart do I thank you for your very kind and highly appreciated letter this morning.

I have been upbraiding myself for not having answered your previous one; but I could scarcely overtake it. I have of late been weak, very weak, and could scarcely creep along at all—but the Lord makes His grace sufficient.

Besides weakness, I have for over a month been afflicted with a dimness of eyesight such as to make reading out of the question. I could see to take food, etc. (though very dimly), but reading was impossible. Even the blessed, blessed Word of God I had to leave alone. It made my hours very long and monotonous—no company—no occupation—no reading; sleepless nights and solitary days. But God is doing all in wisest love; and while He

shuts me up more and more from creature enjoyments, He opens up to me more and more the most unhindered access to Himself in Christ Jesus, and He gives me increasingly a growing desire after it, and capacity for it.

“My God, Thou art all love.  
Not one poor minute 'scapes Thy breast,  
But brings me mercy from above,  
And in this love, more than in bed, I rest.”

Within the last few days a marked improvement of eyesight has commenced, and I have been able to-day to read a few verses of Holy Scripture in large type. Oh, how thankful I should be if I were able as formerly to read the precious Word of God! and I feel assured that if spared a little longer here, my heavenly Father will either restore me that power, or else He will give me something better in the room of it.

Of late my feet are much swollen, indicating, I fancy, progress in decay. The Lord is lowering me into the grave; but He does it with a gentleness and tenderness that fills me with astonishment and gratitude. Praised be His name for everything!

I must draw to a close, though this is now the second day that I have spent on this scribble;

a little exhausts me; had a favourable night last night, with some refreshing slumbers for the body, and more refreshing meditations for the soul. Oh, how inexpressible the Divine tenderness towards me! I have no words wherewith to give utterance to my sense of it. In my case He wonderfully fulfils His wonderful word: "Where sin ABOUNDED, grace did MUCH MORE abound." His goodness, inconceivable, infinite, and all through Christ Jesus, is a continual source of joy, wonder, and humiliation to me.

"Why this profusion of Thy grace  
To such a worm as I?  
Father, I ask, in fixed amaze,  
Explain the mystery."

And the explanation is this: "He delighteth in mercy."

I fondly hope that your health keeps a little improved, and that you get daily tokens of the Lord's working with you to encourage you. I used long ago to take Exod. iii. 12, as a promise given to me as distinctly as to Moses. "CERTAINLY, I will be with thee." Do you, dear brother, appropriate it in the most confiding spirit, and you may sweetly prove every day how much the Lord's faithfulness overpasses our feeble faith.

But I am constrained to pause. God's best blessing rest on thee, my brother.—Ever affectionately yours,  
J. DICKIE.

---

### Letter No. 16.

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF MY LIFE."

November, 1884.

My ever dear Brother in Christ our Head,—  
Hearty thanks for your most kind and most welcome letter, which I highly valued—indeed all your letters are sweet and encouraging to me. I thought to have acknowledged it before now; but have not been able.

I fondly hope that you continue to feel the partial increase of bodily strength acquired in summer; though it must ever be the case that "we who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." However willing the spirit, the flesh will always be a sore hindrance.

I am creeping on at much the old pace—*laden*, BACK-BURDENED with Divine mercies, and filled with happy wonder at God's infinite goodness to me, *the* CHIEF OF SINNERS. My strength is much as before; or, if in any way changed, it seems to be a very little to the stronger side. I

now can read a little (not much), and I find your large type Testament more precious than gold. O my brother, what have I to be thankful for!

It is now over a year and a half since I was called to this Patmos—hedged pretty completely off from my fellows—but shut up to God. These peerless, precious eighteen months have been truly the “GOLDEN AGE” of my life; and I would not have missed them for any consideration. May my most loving and most gracious heavenly Father, neither withhold the needed discipline, far less withdraw it, till He has purged away all my dross—till He has fulfilled in me “ALL the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power.”

“Nought seek I here, but to fulfil  
In life, in death, Thy lovely will.”

Over and over again hath He filled my mouth with laughter, and my tongue with singing, to a degree that I have never experienced before.

Yes, indeed, the Lord hath done, and is still doing, and will continue to do great things for me whereof I am glad (Ps. cxxvi. 3).

But His gracious manifestations are not uniformly joyous. He leaves me sometimes to my own most fickle, deceitful, sinful heart, and gives me new discoveries of its treachery and utter baseness. He

lets me know how completely I am dependent for grace and all its workings on His own free and unmerited goodness, since I can neither constrain the blessing, nor continue it. Indeed, He exercises me with deep, deep siftings, which tend to empty the soul of its natural, but most monstrous self-confidence, and try one more than any amount of bodily suffering can do. But all this is as needful as it is profitable ; and it is but the loving carrying out of the healing treatment of the great unerring Physician. Ultimately, it goes to increase the joy by means of His blessing on it, for it not only intensifies our joy in Himself, but it makes that joy more purely, more exclusively, joy in the Lord. Oh, how ready are we to rejoice in something of our own—to rejoice even in our own joy !

O my brother, God gives us, gives us NOW—gives us as we are, in all our unworthiness—gives us all the exceeding riches of His love—His eternal love—His infinite love—love which shrinks from giving no gift however costly, from carrying out no sacrifice however wonderful.

Let this love in Christ Jesus be our hourly joy and song, and first and foremost of all let us seek grace to trust utterly this loving and gracious One.

I must close this scribble with love to beloved ones whom you may see.—I am, very heartily yours,  
J. DICKIE.

---

### Letter No. 17.

“WE ARE NOT OUR OWN.”

December, 1884.

My ever dear Brother,—Thanks for your welcome letter of this day week. I am glad you are on foot. It has been a time of storms, and we are in the very dead of the year; indeed, you and I are in the very depth of winter in another sense, and our great year of life may close on any day. “WATCH AND PRAY ALWAYS.”

It is just a year (a week ago) since Mr. M—— got so suddenly his summons, and how unexpectedly ours may come we know not. How needful to be “aye ready”—to have loins tightly girt, and lamps carefully trimmed, so that we can welcome the messenger whenever he comes.

As to body, I am pretty much the same—if at all different, it is not to the worse side. My eyes keep improving. They are not as they were, but I can read a little, though with much caution and self-restraint; but I am thankful I can read a little

of God's own Word at all. Oh how good He is to me ! Full of love and tender mercy, and *all*, ALL, ALL that He does is well—" is perfect " (Ps. xviii. 30). Welcome, ever welcome, be the blessed will of my God and Father.

We are not our own—we belong absolutely to Him (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). We are His by creation, infinitely more His by redemption, His to glorify Him in our bodies and in our spirits, which alike are His. Our bodies, then, are not ours, but are merely tools lent to us, wherewith we may do our appointed work as His servants. One servant is called to labour with his body, thus serving God ; another is called to suffer patiently in his body in doing His service.

Happy they who, in either case, seek no selfish end, but seek only to serve His holy will, and to enjoy His satisfying, sanctifying communion !

Our old friend, Mr. A——, has been taken home. Who of us shall be taken next ? To witness death is a great stimulus to decision.

The sinner needs the help of it, and the saint needs it none the less ; but, alas ! the sinner forgets that he is to die, and the saint (the average one) realises the fact and its bearing scarcely any more.



But, when it is vividly realised—as, for instance, by a dying Richard Baxter or by a Paul—what devotion of service it constrains to !—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours, J. DICKIE.

O LORD, TRULY I AM THY SERVANT !

Ps. cxvi. 16.

“ I ’m Thine, O Lord ! and Thine alone,  
I ’m Thine by every tie ;  
By duty’s claims, by love’s glad choice,  
For Thee to live or die.

“ Amid a multitude of griefs,  
One boundless joy is mine—  
The joy that I ’m redeemed by blood,  
To be for ever Thine !

“ There’s not an angel blest in heaven  
So bound to Thee as I ;  
To them Thy love its gifts has given,  
For *me* Love’s self did die.

“ My life, my time, my strength, my all,  
I’d hold and spend for Thee ;  
Oh ! set my heart as free from earth  
As saints in glory be !

“ And place me here, just where Thou wilt,  
As low as Thou shalt please ;  
That I may serve Thy will alone,  
And not my pride or ease.

“ With single eye and fervent heart  
Let this poor life be spent ;  
Eager to use for Thy great name  
Whatever Thou has lent.

“And oh ! when Thou at last shalt come  
To call Thy servants round,  
May I, the meanest of them all,  
Be humbly faithful found.”

J. D.

---

### Letter No. 18.

“ANOTHER NEW YEAR.”

January, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—Your kind letter gave me much pleasure, not only from its sweet, sympathetic, and Christian spirit, but also from its leading me to infer that you were not so prostrated as I had been led to suppose. Of course I was greatly concerned both about you and your work, but I felt relief in commending you to our heavenly Father's most wise and loving care. Well I knew that He would neither harm yourself, nor hinder the true work He has given you. Oh, what unbelief it is to be unbelievably anxious about a Christian in his Saviour's hands ! May He graciously fulfil in you, my brother, all the good pleasure of His will, and make this season of affliction blessed to yourself and helpful to your service !

In answer to your inquiries, I may say that my

infirmities do not diminish either in number or severity; but God's loving and joy-bringing presence with me sweetens all. A fortnight ago I fell on the floor through sheer weakness (many a fall I get), and struck my head violently against the angle of the door-post. I was completely felled, and all the brain symptoms have been much aggravated ever since; but I think there are signs of their beginning to mitigate. However, this shall be only as God pleases; and I desire it to be no otherwise.

In regard to these little incidents, two points are perfectly certain. First, God's hand is in them. Nay! He has the supreme, all-controlling hand in them. Not a sparrow falls without Him—not one hair of our heads is omitted from His register of things that concern us. He fulfils to us the good promise of Psalm xci. We may say, then, of *every* event which befalls us, "*This is God's way for me.*" And, secondly, it is also certain that, "*as for God, His way is perfect*" (Ps. xviii. 30)—perfect in wisdom, perfect in love. Faith knows and sweetly rests on the assured confidence of these two points, and needs no more to keep the heart in perfect peace (Isa. xxvi. 3, 4).

As you remind me, we have entered another year

—a year in the wilderness. The Lord grant that so much of it as you and I may be left to spend here, may be all spent WITH God, FOR God, IN Christ our life. May our communion be closer, our enjoyment of His grace be sweeter, our eye more single, and our consecration more thorough, than we have ever hitherto attained. I was greatly encouraged last night, through the night, with two passages combined:—“THIS *is the* WILL OF GOD, *even your* sanctification” (1 Thess. iv. 3), to this add, “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask ANYTHING *according to* HIS WILL He heareth us” (1 John v. 14). If then we ask for *holiness* (and what gift should equal this in our estimate?) how certainly shall He give it us? (Luke xi. 13).

It is another New Year with me. Last Friday—the day when you wrote your letter, I was entering on my 63rd year. Such seasons call for devout retrospection and recognition of God’s hand, and oh, how wonderfully does the review of my past life exhibit the tenderness of the Divine mercy, and the richness of God’s forgiving grace! I cannot but think, with joyous wonder of the words of Rom. v. 20—“Where *sin* abounded, grace did much more abound,” and to apply them to myself; and,

with more hearty confidence than ever, commit my every interest to the sovereign, the most loving disposal of the Almighty Father.

And what a year the past has been to me! The sweetest, happiest year I have ever lived, with more of God, and less of creatures than I ever enjoyed.

True, I have many ups and downs in my frames; but the downs are all as profitable to me as the ups for the deepening sense of unutterable poverty, and of my helpless dependence for everything on the free grace and mercy of God.

“My God, Thou art *all* love.”

May the Lord raise thee up, and richly bless thee, my brother, and make thee more than hitherto a blessing to others.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. D.



## Letter No. 19.

“NOTHING TO DRAW WITH, AND THE WELL IS DEEP.”

9th February, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—With all my heart do I thank you for your kind letter just to hand, and I bless the Lord for His goodness to you. After all it is the **QUALITY** not so much the *amount* of service that is worth caring for. The whispers of

an Enoch are to the loud shoutings of a Jehu, as gold is to clay. Oh, may He make you and me more and more, and still more and more, Enochs in our day!

I am much as usual in body. A severe blow on the head from the fall some weeks ago has put the brain sadly about, and greatly aggravated some of its more distressing symptoms. I find that unconsciously I have done my brain a great injury during these six years, from 1877 to 1883. I allowed it too little repose in sleep. Summer and winter I got up at 4 A.M., being never in bed, NEVER, more than between five and six hours—generally nearer the five than the six, and this no matter how I had slept. I got many warnings that I was wasting my feeble powers, but did not take them; for oh, how sweet, how inexpressibly sweet these quiet morning hours were to me; the remembrance of them is among my most delightful recollections. I had four clear hours to devote wholly to devotion and to devotional study of the Holy Word, and never allowed anything else to interfere with this. Perhaps I sinned in it. May God of His great love and free mercy forgive me for J sus' blessed sake.

As for the air cushion, I don't know what to say. The one you sent me is still in perfect order, and

has been a help to me to a degree that I cannot describe to you.

I never attempt to do without it, but keep it in constant use. It serves only, however, for one place; and I find more places than one that need it, so I place it where the call is most urgent. Undoubtedly I would be the better for a second one, and have frequently thought of getting it, but I shrink from occasioning any trouble or any expense to you, or to any other kind one; and, if the sending me a cushion would involve *ANY self denial*—even the slightest, to the kind heart which proposes it, or, if it would diminish benefactions in any other direction, I *cannot*, WILL NOT, DARE NOT, accept of it. But I leave the whole matter in your hand, and I am sure you will do exactly what is right. If I were buying another for myself, I would choose one of the same size, but *square* or *oblong*, instead of circular; and having a hollow in the centre, just as this one has; but on no account should I have a square one, if it cost more.

I have had an unusually poor night last night, and so I feel quite limp and languid to-day. I tried to explore some of the wonders in 1 John iv. 16, but my burning brain would not permit of close thought or mental excitement. I had nothing to draw with,

and oh, how deep, how very very deep the wondrous well! But God was with me as my Father, and I felt it delightful to rest calmly at His feet.

“Sweet to lie passive in His hands,  
And know no will but His.”

Often, often, often does He make me to feel my utter barrenness, and I am glad of it; for it helps me to realise more perfectly that all my springs are in Him alone, and, though He comforts me as never before, He equally humbles me as never before. And this is just as needful as the comfort, and just as sweet; indeed the humbling is an essential part of the consolation.

If it did not humble me, I could not think the comfort to be from Him at all, and it is a most sweet humbling when He manifests to us our own enormous sinfulness and ignorance, our ruin and our wretchedness, by the light of His forgiving loving and unbounded grace. Oh, yes :—

“The Lord doth light my candle so  
That it doth shine full bright,  
The Lord, my God, doth also make  
My darkness to be light.”—Ps. xviii. 28.

And therefore :—

“My heart for gladness springs,  
It cannot more be sad ;  
For very joy it laughs and sings,  
Sees nought but sunlight glad.



The Sun that glads mine eyes  
Is Christ, the Lord I love,  
I sing for joy of that which lies  
Laid up for us above."

With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 20.

"ABOUNDING SIN, AND MUCH MORE ABOUNDING GRACE."

11th February, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—Just a sentence or two to intimate the safe arrival of the cushion and the letter; and to thank both Mr. B—— and yourself with all my heart and my soul for your great and most undeserved kindness. Will you please to convey my deep heartfelt thanks to dear Mr. B——, greatly honoured and dearly beloved; and also to accept the same for yourself.

I would have liked you had mentioned how you were; but I infer from the omission that you are well.

I had some sweet, sweet meditation in the long, sleepless, pained hours through last night on Rom. v. 20—Abounding sin, and MUCH MORE abounding grace. How wonderful, how overwhelming, and how unspeakably delightful, when one is enabled to apprehend, in power, the greatness both of the

sin and of the grace. "That thou mayest be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done" (Ezek. xvi. 63).  
As Luther sang of old :—

"Though great our sin, and sore our wounds,  
And deep and dark our fall,  
His helping mercy hath NO BOUNDS,  
His love surpasseth all,  
Our trusty, loving Shepherd He,  
Who shall at last set Israel free  
From all our sin and sorrow."

Again thanking Mr. B —— and yourself, and  
with hearty love to you both, I am, very affection-  
ately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 21.

"THE INFINITE HEART LOVE OF THE INFINITE GOD."

March, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—It was a great pleasure for me to receive your kind letter of the 21st. Your letters are *always* a great enjoyment to me—far more, I am sure, than you think them to be. The Lord is, oh how good, and He withholdeth from me no good thing. May He add to all His priceless gifts a fervently grateful heart! As the hymn says :—"Who should louder sing than I?"

Dear Mr. B—— most kindly wrote me some weeks ago, sending with his letter a delightful little book. He considerably told me not to answer his letter, but when writing to you to let him know through you that I had received it. I was unusually weakly at the time, and was glad to avail myself of his kindness. May I then trouble you, my beloved brother, to convey to him, when you see him, *my* WARMEST THANKS for both his letter and book, and to assure him of my humble but very hearty love to him for the sake of our Great Beloved. I fondly hope that both he and Mr. P—— keep moderately well. The Lord bless them and graciously help in every way you and them in your happy service.

I am much as before ; scarcely stronger, and yet scarcely worse, on the whole. As for bodily health, the Lord, for wise and loving purposes, keeps me low. I have had a poor and trying winter hitherto; but think that, if anything, I am of late just a shade—not stronger—but easier. But oh, how the Lord comforts me, while also He humbles, and still more and more deeply humbles me ; He opens up to me, as the vision can be borne, the unutterable depths of evil of every kind that are in my heart ; while, despite all my wickedness, He none the less

lavishes on me the manifestations of His wonderful love. ALL IN CHRIST, ALL IN CHRIST. How sweet to the tired heart is the assurance of possessing the infinite HEART-LOVE of the Infinite God—the love of His whole heart and His whole soul (Jer. xxxii. 41). Far, far sweeter is *His* LOVE, enjoyed so *fully*, so *freely* in Christ, than ANY GIFT OF HIS HAND—than ALL gifts of His hand put together. It makes His gifts to us doubly, trebly, a thousand-fold more delightful; nay, it not only adds sweetness to the gifts, but it sweetens altogether even the afflictions that of themselves would be very sorrowful—for the love that afflicts is equally deep and tender with the love that consoles. I desire to have my whole soul *saturated* with the most assured faith of this unbounded love in Christ Jesus, and to walk in the continual joy and STRENGTH of it—seeking nothing and needing nothing but a more suitable reciprocation, on my part, of this amazing love.

“ Once earthly joy I craved,  
Sought peace and rest;  
Now I seek Thee alone,  
Give what is best;  
This all my prayer shall be,  
More love, O Christ, to Thee,  
More love to Thee.

“Let sorrow do its work ;  
Come grief and pain ;  
Sweet are Thy messengers,  
Sweet their refrain.  
When they can sing with me,  
More love, O Christ to Thee,  
More love to Thee.”

I must close, my beloved brother. May the Lord deal with you *always*, according to your great need, and His far greater love. To that LOVE I affectionately commend you, and am your most deeply unworthy brother in Jesus, J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 22.

“ONLY ONE SOURCE OF JOY.”

April, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—I thank you for your last letter, and for the refreshment it brought me. I thank the Lord that you are stronger, and that other loved ones in Dublin are moderately well. May He make His grace abound to you all, and no less THROUGH you all, “that ye may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith ye yourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor. i. 4).

Thank you, dear brother, for your reference to

Isa. xii., it has often afforded me sweet and nutritious pasture (John x. 9) but since you called my attention to it I have returned to it again and again; I find every word of it delightful! How surpassingly wonderful are the precious words of God, they are no less than "Spirit and Life."

Dispensationally, the lovely little song is to be sung "at that day"—that glorious day, for which all other days have been made; but faith has already entered upon possession of the great blessedness in its initial stages, and faith can therefore raise her exulting voice and sing this song *even now*. O my brother, let us join in singing it, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Ps. xxxiv. 3). For **ALREADY** has He given us comfort on **EVERY SIDE** (Ps. lxxi. 21). We have many occasions for sorrow, while we have only one source of joy—only **ONE**, no more (compare in 2 Cor. i. 5 the word *sufferings* in the plural with the word *consolation* in the singular); but the **ONE** joy outweighs the many sorrows a thousand million times, and far more. The two cannot be weighed together (Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. i. 3). And how abundant are His consolations; to a thirsty friend we gladly hand a glass of water, but God **POURS**, **POURS** water upon him that is thirsty, and turns

His drenching floods upon the dry ground (Isa. xliv. 3).

For He makes our joy to be FULL (1 John i. 4); and therefore He opens His treasury of heaven overhead, and pours out on us so profusely His blessings that we have actually not capacity to receive (Mal. iii. 10).

Why, then, should any of us be needlessly dejected? Christ was sent—God's commissioned One—to "comfort all that mourn" (Isa. lxi. 3). And now, since He has gone, the Holy Spirit has come to be to us, in His absence, ALL that His presence could have been; ay, and far more (John xvi. 7), and this Holy Spirit comes to us under the very name of "The Comforter," and among the very earliest fruits which He produces in the believing heart are "love," and "joy," and "peace" (Gal. v. 22).

But in all this, as in every sphere of spiritual experience, there is room and there is need for vigorous self-jealousy; for "our hearts are deceitful above all things and *desperately* WICKED" (Jer. xvii. 9). We do well to make sure that it is really "the Comforter" who comforts us, and not the Great DECEIVER of the *whole world* (Rev. xii. 9), for our hearts crave so greedily for comfort, for religious

comfort, and Satan is so ready to help us to it. The stony-ground hearers (the most numerous class of professing Christians) received the word with joy (Luke viii. 13); their religion began with joy, and as soon as it threatened sorrow they dropped it. When John the Baptist came with his most alarming words of rebuke and threatening (see some of them in Matt. iii.) the Jews, instead of fear and alarm, REJOICED in him (see John v. 35), and so it is still.

When comfort is genuine it is, in all cases, preceded by sorrow (Isa. xii. 1); it is only mourners whom Jesus comforts (Isa. lxi. 3). Their joy is the joy of Ezek. xvi. 63. When THE COMFORTER begins His work in any soul He begins it by deep conviction of sin (John xvi. 8); in fact, every true spiritual consolation is but a sweetly comforted sorrow (Matt. v. 4). The Christian's joy is a *resurrected* joy—a joy that was first killed and is then made alive again! Whereas a false joy has been a joy all along. And when joy is the working of the Holy Ghost it is accompanied (always) with other graces, such as deep humility, hearty repentance, fervent love, unshrinking self-denial, devoted obedience. Ah, my brother, many have so little, little joy IN GOD, because it is sought so much in



creatures ; but He will always comfort us just as we unreservedly consecrate ourselves to Him.

My poor tabernacle of clay continues much as before ; a little worse in some respects, a little firmer in others, but very frail. I am just as God has chosen for me, and with my whole heart, without any feeling of dissent, I joyously AMEN His perfect and blessed will. His way of love with me is unspeakable. — With hearty love, ever dear brother, yours affectionately, J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 23.

“THE WORD OF GOD, AND THE ILLUMINATION OF THE  
HOLY SPIRIT.”

May, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—I have to thank you again for another letter. Your letters are always a comfort to me ; they are always fragrant with the sweet perfumes of His name, whose “name is as ointment poured forth.” I am very thankful to see that you think yourself stronger. The Lord give you, my brother, the spiritual power that you desire, and also the bodily strength you need, as indeed He will (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). “The Lord

loveth a cheerful giver;" He is such a cheerful giver Himself.

I have entered on the third year of my solitude; years to me of unprecedented blessing. Time never passed so quickly with me, and certainly it never brought me so much enjoyment; and *as for SERVICE*, no one *can* serve God otherwise than by doing His will, and that blessed Will can be just as delightfully served by *patience* as by *labours*. We glorify God, not by mere doing, nor by mere giving, but by what WE ARE. A feeble, suffering body is to Him just as holy and acceptable a sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1) as a strong one; and with all my heart I desire to lay my poor, frail body on His altar, an unreserved sacrifice to serve Him in *patience*, if not in *labours*; and it is the *altar* that in either case SANCTIFIES THE GIFT (Matt. xxiii. 19).

I resume again, for I can scribble only a little at a time. I have just been feasting on some of the Psalms. Oh, how enriching! far beyond all gold, and how surpassingly sweet—far beyond any honey (Ps. xix. 10).

But the blessed Word of God is thus delightful to us only when the Holy Spirit shines in our hearts through it. When by means of it He actually gives us the "light of the knowledge of

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). Oh, what moments, what hours, we then enjoy ! The soul grows more in such seasons in a *single hour* than in years of ordinary living. And it is only by this actual vision of God through the illumination of the Holy Spirit that we come to know what God really is. Books cannot teach it (not even the Bible by itself); man cannot teach it; one's own researches cannot find it out. *And* it is by this manifestation of God (see Ps. xxvii. 4 ; John xiv. 21) that we come to know ourselves—heretofore very imperfectly known. Oh, how His overpowering brightness contrasts with and manifests to us our own hideous darkness; how deeply humbling, yet how elevating this blessed vision is ! It lifts up, and it casts down ; it kills, and it makes alive. I cannot tell you, dear brother, how the Lord has been manifesting Himself to me these two by-gone years in this double way. It is like a Pentecost to the individual soul. The Lord give to you and to me a fresh Pentecost EVERY DAY.

This actual spiritual vision of God (2 Cor. iii. 18), cannot but dispel all our fancied notions of our own goodness. It works on us precisely as it did on Job (see Job xlii. 6). In the dense darkness of the world, or in the dim twilight of the professing

church, we may dote about our graces, or our services; but there can be *no such thing*—no approach to it, while we are really in God's seen presence, and enjoy by the Divine help of the Holy Spirit, the clear vision of HIS grace and HIS glory. Then our once fancied light is turned into darkness.

But how inexpressibly delightful it is to have one's own evil thoroughly revealed in the blazing light of God's *marvellous* LOVE, a revelation, which though it humbles us to the dust, brings no particle of bitterness with it. Nay, it fills us with unequalled joy—a joy that is purely and only IN THE LORD. Oh, what a sweet death it is, to be killed to the cursed self-life of the natural man, by the kisses of the Lord's mouth (Song of Sol. i. 2).

We can well afford to look honestly at our evil in this light, and to let the vision work its proper effects on our hearts; the worse we see ourselves to be, the more glorious does God's free, full, unhindered love appear; and the deeper the heart-felt joy of being eternally the objects of it. Very different all this, from the imperfect and superficial conviction of sin attainable *through the law*. The law is for the hardened sinner; but, oh, my brother, how it both breaks one's heart, and also heals it, to look at our conduct as *poor, lost*, PRODIGALS, while

we stand beside the prodigal's Father and feel His warm kisses on our cheek, while the hot tears of a Father's love and joy at our recovery fill us to overflowing with mingled grief and joy.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours, J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 24.

“DELIGHT THYSELF IN THE LORD.”

27th June, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—Your kind letter reached me last night. I am glad to hear that you are so favourably circumstanced; and I heartily pray that our heavenly Father may greatly bless your retirement for the invigoration of your health, and still more (to use your own words), “to increase spirituality of soul.”

Thank you, dear brother, for the verse from Ps. xxxvii. What a feast—yes FEAST, the Lord gave me the other night from that psalm, especially ver. 4, “Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart.” Oh, how good He is! He first gives us desires, and these desires He intensifies to a “vehemency” (2 Cor. vii. 11); which consumes us like the fever pangs of hunger (Ps.

cxix. 20 ; Ps. xlii. 1, 2 ; lxiii. 1, 2 ; lxxxiv. 1, 2) ; and then these immense desires He more than satisfies to our unspeakable delight, see Ps. lxxv. 9.

I am in the second month of the third year of my solitary confinement :—Oh, what a precious season has the Lord made it to me—a season of emptying and deep humiliation, of wonderful Divine patience with a wicked worm ; of sweet communion and of clearly answered prayer ; of all the mercies with which He has loaded me during my entire life (Ps. lxxviii. 19), these two by-gone years have been by far the crowning mercy.

I sometimes wonder whether there be many in the three kingdoms so happy as I am ; and it is perfectly certain that there is not another who so little deserves it—but “GRACE REIGNETH,” see Rom. v. 20.

“Glory to Thee for strength withheld,  
And want and weakness known,  
And the fear that sends me to Thy breast,  
For what is most my own.

“I have a heritage of joy,  
Which yet I may not see,  
But the hand which bled to make it mine,  
Is keeping it for me.”

The enclosed note was scribbled as a reply to your letter over a month ago ; when I read it over,

on getting it finished, I felt a scruple about sending it, and so I cast it aside and wrote another ; I was afraid you would think of me, and of my secret exercise more highly (much more highly) than truth would warrant ; but I fell in with it two days ago, and on reading it again, I see no reason why I should not send it to you, but only with the careful warning, that you must not think of me as ABLE to come up to anything better than the very *poorest discharge* possible of this little ministry, to which the Lord, in His astonishing condescension is calling me.

And I want you, dear brother, to pray for me (let this be your only prayer for me) that the Lord may strengthen me *in every* way for this blessed service.

My lack of bodily vigour sorely cripples me, for my poor brain breaks down under any protracted mental effort.

And STILL *more* do I need *spiritual grace*, which grace the blessed Lord is as ready as He is able to bestow on *even* ME (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). Will you ask for me this very thing ? And now, dear brother, may the Lord enrich your own soul daily, more and more, and make you a channel of His mercies to others.—Ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.

“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but *now mine eye seeth Thee* ; WHEREFORE I ABHOR MYSELF, and *repent in dust and ashes*” (Job xlii. 5, 6),—Amen and Amen.

The following letter is the one referred to in the last.



### Letter No. 25.

“PROMOTION IN THE LORD’S SERVICE.”

May, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—Hearty thanks for your kind letters, they are always a comfort to me. I am glad that you seem to be well. The Lord give you strength of body as you need, and especially spiritual power.

You express desire for more of this power. *Amen!* AMEN! my brother. The Lord give that abundantly to you and to me. I have been and am pleading with Him for fulfilment to me of John vii. 37-39 ; but you express further desire for strength in service. Do not trouble yourself about that, dear brother ; so long as God means you to be doing what you do, He will give you all the strength you need. He ministers seed to all His sowers, and strength to all His labourers (2 Cor. ix. 10 ; xii. 9).



Some of my beloved friends have written to comfort me, because the Lord has taken my little service from me ; but He has not done this, though I abundantly deserved that He should, my thought is that He has most graciously promoted me. Oh, His gentleness to me all my life has been unutterable. He found me in the outside wilderness, far off, and He brought me into the camp of His people. After a time He led me from the camp into the court of the tabernacle, and trusted me with a most lowly little service there. And now He has led me from the outer court into the holy place to minister before Himself at the Golden Altar, and now nothing further can be looked for, but that He call His most unworthy one from the holy place to the Holy of Holies, there to see His face and to serve Him for evermore (Rev. xxii. 4).

Shall I venture to hint to you what I conceive my present little service to consist in? If I do so, it is with the earnest desire that you ask the Lord to fit me for it, for I feel INEXPRESSIBLY insufficient.

It consists, I think, of four parts :—

I. Praise.—O my brother, how little, how very little, is God praised by us (Ps. cvii.). No service can surpass this, it is the exercise of the glorified

in heaven, and of the angels ; but our praise should be more hearty than that of angels. God created us for His praise, and redeemed us for His praise, and has new created us to praise Him (1 Peter ii. 9). We have always opportunity and always occasion. Oh, how this blessed exercise enlarges one's own estimate of God's grace and glory, and kindles into a more fervent glow our love to Him.

## II. Prayer, especially INTERCESSION.

What a field of ministry is here, and yet how sadly neglected. Prayer for ALL SAINTS (Eph. vi. 18); prayer for ALL MEN (1 Tim. ii. 1). Do I know any case of need of any kind, I am to pray for *that man*, and it is not to be mere formal praying, it is to be IN AGONY of earnestness as the Greek in Col. iv. 12 has it. See how the Apostles valued the ministry of prayer, they set it even before preaching (Acts vi. 4). See how Paul estimated it, in all his Epistles he tells us how constantly he prayed for them ; and he asked the help of their prayers.

I have said that praise is the work of angels, let me add that intercession is the work in heaven of our *Adorable Redeemer*, nay more, it is the *highest* function of His priestly office.

I humbly think that God is calling me to this honourable service,—will you ask Him to FIT ME FOR IT?

III. I have dwelt too long on the preceding, and must now be brief.

I know not how to name the third. May I call it in a general way, “Trying to please God”? and this by entire resignation to His lovely will; by joyous patience; by constantly aiming at carrying out 1 Cor. x. 31; and by *continually* REPEATING the solemn offering referred to in Rom. xii. 1. And I desire grace to carry out this in the most thorough way (Phil. ii. 5-8; Ps. xl. 8). God rests in Himself, and our only rest must be IN HIM.

IV. Enjoying God.—This, too, is a service. I got the idea of it from the words “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to ENJOY HIM.” God is to be the *only* joy, and if He be not our ONLY joy, He will soon cease to be a joy at all! And if God be glorified by our joy, and if weary, weary, joyless hearts around may be helpfully influenced by our joy (Zech. viii. 23), oh, let us be faithful in this service, and let it be the full joy of souls who have found in Christ ALL that their hearts desired. Oh, my brother, the *Man of Sorrows* is at this moment the most joyous Being in the universe.

Let us, in our measure, seek even now to enter into the joy of our Lord.

And now, my brother, you must not for a moment think that I am discharging this ministry of mine in a suitable way. I am humbled to think of my deplorable deficiency, and am constrained to repeat the words of Job xlii. 6. But will you notice that though God may please to change your service as to field, this by no means involves your dismissal from it. And above all, *will you ASK HELP FOR ME?* The above four fields are greatly overlooked, but they are of immense importance. No external service is comparable to them, and how delightful it is to be in any measure helped to discharge them. But they are delightful only to Love. How sweet to praise God, but this only as we love Him. How sweet to pray for men, but this only as we love them. But I must close.—  
With hearty love, ever yours,        JOHN DICKIE.

#### THE SERVICE OF PATIENCE.

“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? . . . I will show him how great things he must SUFFER.”—ACTS ix. 6, 16.

“‘O GRANT me, Lord, the fervent love  
That cannot choose but serve;  
Help me, with burning zeal for Thee,  
To task each strained nerve,  
Nor ever from my happy toil  
A single moment swerve.’”

- “ Thus prayed a youthful praying heart.  
His gracious Saviour smil'd :  
' Wouldst thou thus singly serve my will ?  
I grant thy wish, my child ;  
A path I have laid out for Thee,  
With choicest service fill'd.' ”
- “ He laid his hand upon the youth,  
And gently touched his brain—  
At once his nerves were all unstrung,  
His body filled with pain ;<sup>1</sup>  
While the dull heart could scarcely force  
Its blood through sluggish vein. ”
- “ Now, lay thee down upon this bed,  
To lie for weary years ;  
No strength to toil, nor mind to think,  
Nor friend to dry thy tears ;  
And I will send thee, one by one,  
Each ill that nature fears. ”
- “ But fear thou nought ; the more thy griefs,  
Thy joys shall sweeter be ;  
The less of comforts earth affords,  
The more thou 'lt find in Me ;  
And as I strip earth's all away,  
Mine all I 'll give to thee. ”
- “ And this shall be thy happy work,  
To sing my joyous praise ;  
And still, when plunged in deeper depths,  
A louder song to raise,  
Till men, astonish'd learn from thee  
The triumphs of my grace. ”
- “ And I will make thy service blest  
To many a weary soul,  
Who thus shall learn how sweetly I  
Can broken hearts console ;  
And shall be helped their loads of grief  
Upon my love to roll. ”

“ Nor think thy life misspent, although  
 In feebleness 'tis past :  
 Thy weakness shall my mighty power  
 More clearly manifest :  
 And when I faithful service crown,  
 I 'll crown thine such at last.”

“ The youth brush'd off the starting tear,  
 And hush'd the rising sigh ;  
 Then laid him on his lowly couch,  
 To sing there till he die ;  
 For faith and love can make a heaven  
 E'en now beneath the sky.”

J. D.



## Letter No. 26.

“ THE WILL OF GOD.”

August, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—Your letter has just reached me, and, as usual, is very welcome. All your letters smell sweetly of the myrrh and the aloes, and the cassia, which perfume His priestly and royal robes, and the fragrance is very delightful. I fondly hope that your sojourn in Scotland is being used of the Lord for the strengthening of your body for its service ; but He will take care of that.

I am very feeble of late, more so than ever, and the brain is very tender. But it is all as it ought to be, because it is the will of God. I have just

named the will of God. Oh, my brother, how inexpressibly *precious* should that will be in our eyes! How sweet to rest abidingly in it, and how glorifying to God that we do so. No service whatever serves Him like this, and no joy is so delightful, or so sanctifying to ourselves as this. It was Christ's own service—His only one (Ps. xl. 7, 8). It was Christ's own joy—His only one (John iv. 32, 34; Heb. xii. 2); and this His ONE joy, His ONE service, He has left in legacy to *you* and *me* (John xiv. 27; 1 John iv. 17). Let us claim possession of the blessed legacy. And what an easy yoke it is (Matt. xi. 30); but it is easy only to the shoulders of faith and love. What He calls a yoke here, He calls a cross elsewhere (Luke ix. 23), etc.; and to unrenewed nature (religious nature quite the same as atheistic), the yoke of Jesus appears as such an appalling cross, that rather than take it up the man will hide from it in hell. Therefore, Christ's yoke finds but few to bear it. But to those who do take it up in truth, oh, how delightful it is! The happy bearer of it has nothing in his lot but what he rejoices to have in it; and there is nothing wanting in that lot which he would prefer to possess, for he desires, and could delight in nothing, save in the will of God; and

that will he rests in, as being carried fully out hour by hour in all the details of his daily life. He craves no outward mercy that his Father withholds from him, and he desires release from no burden which his Father imposes on him. He, therefore, leaves all his outward interests to the arrangement of his Father's unerring wisdom, and all his internal frames and experiences to the control of the Holy Spirit, careful only to follow where that blessed Spirit leads (Rom. viii. 14), and to say "*Amen*" with all his heart to whatever that loving and trusted hand bestows.

Dear brother, my words on such a theme are both poor and pitiful babble, which are sure to weary you, but it is very pleasant to me even to talk thus of HIM to one who loves Him. How wonderfully (as seems to me), has the Lord been opening up to me many of these things during these past, peerless, two years, not in words or theories, but in sweet and most humbling experience of them.

Never before have I been constrained so to **ABHOR MYSELF** and *to repent in dust and ashes*, for never before has mine eye been privileged to see Him with such clearness (Job xlii. 5, 6). O may you and I be led of Him deeper and deeper



into these blessed depths, whither He takes the soul to whom he means to manifest the beauty of the Lord! (Ps. xxvii. 4).—But I must conclude, with hearty love, very affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 27.

“THE CROSS OF CHRIST.”

29th August, 1885.

My ever dear Brother in our Lord,—I am really at a loss how to express my grateful sense of your great kindness in calling to enquire for me. I did not know you were here till after you were gone. It was much better, as it would have put me greatly about, for, dearly as I love you, I *could* not then have seen you. I am far weaker than probably you think, and my brain is very irritable. But the will of the Lord, though trying to the flesh, is welcome. We hope to meet soon, and elsewhere. The Lord is infinitely kind to us both.

Thank you, dear brother, for quoting in your last letter the testimony of the dear servant of God, in regard to the *Divine power* under affliction. Yes, indeed, the “Comforter” can sweetly comfort; and His consolations make me often and often bless

Him for the trial which needs them, and which constrains the thirsty soul to resort to Him.

Of all my past life, the sweetest, choicest portion has, beyond degree, been the two past years. Oh, what a time of mercy has it been to me—a time of humbling, and a time of *love*. I believe that more joy has flowed through my heart, in these two years of sifting, than all the joy from all sources put together during the preceding sixty years, and that *fifty times over*. I really knew not that so much of heaven could be enjoyed in this world of sin and sorrow as I know now—for heaven is often in my little room. Blessed, blessed be God for the special gift of these two years. He has put me into a Nebuchadnezzar furnace, but He has been with me all through it, and has suffered not even then the smell of fire to pass upon me. Along with Him, fire does not burn, neither does water drown (Isa. xliii. 2). The Cross of Jesus, whether one lie beside it or beneath it, or, *best of all*, hang upon it along with Jesus (Gal. ii. 20 ; v. 24 ; vi. 14), is, as you know, dear brother, the one very sweetest spot in all the world. Happy, happy they who have learned in blessed experience (whatever be the cost), not only its priceless value as making the soul truly rich, but also its unequalled sweetness as fill-

ing the heart with peace and gladness. But for this purpose it needs to be a Cross which crucifies and puts to death ; and the crucifixion must be a real crucifixion, issuing in an actual death—a death to the world (Gal. vi. 14 ; compare 1 John ii. 15, 16), and a death, too, to the cursed self-life (Gal. ii. 20), including every single form and degree of self-will. A sham cross comes out of an unreal profession, and leads to a self-deceiving joy. Oh, let you and me, dear brother, welcome with both our hands, and with eyes filled with tears of gratitude, every help which God sends us, towards our more perfect self-crucifixion. A *breaking* heart is an unhappy heart, but it owes its unhappiness to the half of it that is whole, not the half that is broken. A *broken* heart is a happy heart, and no other is ; for God's end in breaking it is that He may heal it.

If we take counsel at our own fleshly hearts, there is nothing so undesirable as these severe afflictions ; but if we consult the clear statements of the Word of God, and the uniform experience of the most advanced saints, there is no condition under heaven SO BLESSED as to be in the fiery furnace, with the presence of Jesus sweetly enjoyed in it.

“ I have been there, and still would go ;  
’Tis like a little heaven below.”

Nowhere else is God so enjoyed—nowhere else is the world so worthless, or the flesh so mortified. God has no more precious gift to give to His specially beloved than a heavy, heavy cross, with sufficient grace to keep the heart singing cheerfully beneath it (Acts xvi. 25). The water is changed into wine, and the more water, only the more wine !

Let us never forget for a moment our true calling in the world. You and I are to be each an Abraham in our day ; only we have far clearer light, and far loftier promises, and a far nearer relationship to God than Abraham *consciously* enjoyed. God calls us to go beyond him in faith and courage and devoted obedience. For it is not Abraham that lives in us—IT IS CHRIST ; and the life which we now live in the flesh is expected to be—MUST BE, A LIFE OF FAITH—a life which receives its entire shape and character from the amazing fact that it is neither you nor I who are living it, but CHRIST WHO IS LIVING IT IN US (Gal. ii. 20). And Christ living an earthly life in you and in me will be the same devoted, unearthly, holy servant of God’s will that He was in His own Person. O let us covet earnestly this BEST GIFT !

I conclude with hearty love, and commending you to our heavenly Father's richest grace, I am ever yours in Jesus,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 28.

"IN THY LAW DO I MEDITATE."

Irvine, October, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—I thank you for your last kind letter. It is always a great pleasure to hear of your welfare, bodily or spiritual; and I fondly hope that the beneficial effects of last summer's recess abide with you still. Oh, the unwearied goodness of our heavenly Father! Nothing grieves or astonishes me more about myself than the strange disproportion that there is between His liberal givings and my unworthy return of thankfulness; but this, too, is to be had only in answer to prayer.

I have been very frail all the summer, and am no stronger now. Indeed, I wonder that I am as I am. I have no exercise *at ALL*, but lie, lie, with no intermission. Digestion is at its very lowest, sleep insufficient, no conversation, no relaxation whatever; nothing but think, think, think, the entire day and much of the sleepless night; and all this when my disease lies chiefly in the brain.

But it is all arranged by God in consummate wisdom and most tender love ; and so, without knowing what His will designs for me in the future, I bid it now a hearty welcome, with my most fervent “ Amen.” He sweetens my cup till there is not a trace of bitter in it, with the dear enjoyment of His own presence ; “ He leads me into His banqueting-house, and His banner over me is love.” Ofttimes He FILLS—yes, FILLS—my mouth with laughter, and my tongue with singing.

I am glad that you turn occasionally to the rich pasture of 1 John, to get a feast of fat things. May the Lord “ SATISFY your soul as with marrow and fatness ” by means of His precious Word ! I have gone over the Epistle twice within the past two years, hanging over it verse by verse, and spending on the epistle say, three or four weeks. I greatly enjoy the meditative reading of the Holy Scriptures. Last time I went over it in this way, I was greatly stirred up with the words in 1 John iv. 15, 16—the mutual dwelling of God in the soul and the soul in God ; and I am making this the burden of my prayer since, and the Lord WILL answer it fully, for with such a word as chap. v. 14, 15, may we not count with confidence that such prayers shall assuredly be granted ?

I am *more and more* struck with the infinite fulness and incomparable sweetness of the Word of God; it grows fuller and sweeter to me. No honey is half so sweet, and no gold half so precious (Ps. xix. 10). It is our MILK (1 Pet. ii. 2); and the healthier any soul is, the keener is its appetite for this milk, and the more delightful its satisfaction. A new-born babe *needs* milk, *desires* milk—genuine milk, with nothing added to it and nothing abstracted from it, for the Creator has compounded the ingredients of the milk so as to fit perfectly the requirements of the feeble little one; and, besides this, the babe needs to be fed *often*, the intervals between feeding being very brief; and so it is with the Christian and the milk-like Word.

Oh, my brother, how wonderful is the Lord's goodness to us! Even in this sorrow-stricken world, what rich provision He has made for our happiness! Far, far more of heaven is to be had than most of us think. The very last thing that a man needs to go in search of is—joy! The most abundant materials for it lie thickly scattered around our feet. God's words are all written to us that our "*joy may be FULL*" (1 John i. 4), and faith is designed to fill us with a joy that is unspeakable (1 Pet. i. 8).

Oh, if we seek our joy *in God*, and in God ALONE—ALONE (Ps. lxxiii. 25), it is impossible to miss it ; but if a man seek it elsewhere, it is impossible to find it. He is our “ EXCEEDING JOY ” (Ps. xliii. 4) ; and the great number of unhappy, unsatisfied souls in the world—aye, and in the Church—sadly indicates that few, few seek their joy in God ; few bring their labouring, heavy-laden hearts to Him, who never fails to lead such into “ *rest* ” (Matt. xi. 29, 30).—With hearty love and thanks, I am, ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 29.

“BUT NOW MINE EYE SEETH THEE.”

Irvine, November, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—I have your welcome letter this morning. Never think that the receiving of a letter from you is a tax, it is only a great pleasure and blessing ; it is a tax more or less to reply, but I take as much time as I need, never less than two or three days—indeed, my only *external* connection with my fellows is kept up by a few, a very few, letters.

I fondly hope that dear Mr. P—— and yourself keep the stronger for your summer holiday.



“Know ye not that your *bodies* are the *members* OF CHRIST?” (1 Cor. vi. 15). How gracious is He to count it so.

I keep pretty nearly the same, slowly but steadily growing weaker; but weakness is welcomed, since it is my heavenly Father's lovely will, and weakness is SWEET, when it *needs*, and seeks, and finds its full repose on the bosom of Jesus. I feel that my body, sorely broken as it now is, is telling very decidedly on my mind—my mind, too, in all its faculties, gets very broken; but how shall I thank God for His grace. The blessed links which bind me to Him get closer and stronger. He is becoming more and more, “The strength of my heart and my portion for ever.”

You are quite right in saying, “You are not looking for bodily strength, neither do I think you are anxious about it.” No, dear brother, not the least, I have no wish whatever on the subject; let the blessed God please Himself perfectly in the matter (He shall assuredly do so), and I feel as if His pleasure would be delightful to me. Never, never, had I anything like the full-hearted rest in God that He gives me now; and in manifesting His grace and His glory to me as He is doing, I feel He is giving me a blessing, incomparably

greater than the restoration of full health would be.

On my face, with tears of joy, and love, and thanksgiving, I praise Him for the suffering which makes me NEED Him so urgently, and for the sufficient grace with which He meets ALL my utmost need, and makes my full cup to run over.

Thank you, dear brother, for the beautiful verse you give me (Ps. xxvii. 4), it is a memorable verse to me, never, indeed, to be forgotten ; some fourteen months ago or more, I was led to it, I felt, like David, drawn to make it my ONE desire. A desire to be daily, earnestly sought after, and that, for the rest of my little time here, the Lord would take me into His own house, and show me His own loveliness ; with Moses, I kept crying, "Show me Thy glory" (Exod. xxxiii. 18). And, Oh, my brother, the Lord has condescended to hear my unworthy cry, He has come unto me to make His abode with me, to show me His love, and TO MANIFEST HIMSELF TO ME (John xiv. 21, 23). And he has done this in a measure exceeding abundant above what I had asked or thought of (Eph. iii. 20), for He delights to POUR water on the thirsty and floods on the dry ground (Isa. xlv. 3). When He gives, the difficulty is to find room in the

heart for His munificent gifts (see Mal. iii. 10). And, oh, my brother, what a vision it is to behold the glory of the Lord in any measure, if it be only real ; it is this that makes heaven to be heaven (Rev. xxii. 4). We are meant to live abidingly in the humbling sanctifying joy of it (2 Cor. iii. 18). We may have any amount of external knowledge about Christ, but no man can really behold His spiritual glories, save he whose eyes have been anointed by the Holy Ghost, whose delight it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us (John xvi. 14). But when this vision is once seen, ever after, nothing else is judged by that man to have any loveliness.

Just as the light of the sun at blazing noonday blots out all the stars, so the glory of Jesus, really seen, quenches, to that soul, all meaner glories. SELF, once so very beautiful, and the world, once so very attractive, have now lost all their charms ; the world is now seen to be but *dung* (note the intensely depreciating word—DUNG, Phil. iii. 8), and it no longer attracts, it disgusts. And self is seen to be only *vile* (Job xl. 4), and is sincerely “loathed” (Ezek. xxxvi. 31) and “abhorred,” but why abhorred? Let Job answer (Job xlii. 6), “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now *mine eye* SEETH THEE, *wherefore*, WHEREFORE I abhor MYSELF.”

The enriched and thrice blessed soul seeks NOTHING now in creatures, and LESS than NOTHING in self; he seeks ALL, and he finds ALL in "JESUS ONLY."

Nothing, nothing, save this vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, can deliver the soul from the tyranny of sin, but it effectually secures this. Hence 1 John iii. 6 ; 3 John 11.

Oh, my brother, what a gift has God given us in giving us His Son! He has given nothing like it to any other creatures—in fact, God has no second gift to match this gift of gifts. In giving us Christ, He has given us more than all His other givings, in all other worlds, to all other creatures, could amount to, if added together.

To give heaven and its blessedness for ever to a holy creature, is, as it were, nothing at all to the unmatched gift of His beloved, His co-equal Son. Him has He given to us, not holy, but utterly dead in sin; given that this Son of His love might first die in order that our sins might be righteously forgiven to us, and then rise again, that He might be filled with ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD (Col. ii. 9); and then become to the pardoned sinner his satisfying and everlasting portion.

I am ashamed to babble, like a child, so unworthily on such a theme, but who can speak of it

worthily? Much less such as I, who am still a child, and have not been lifted out of childish things, but who understands and thinks and speaks as an ignorant and foolish child; but it is delightful to me *even to babble as I can* of love and of loveliness like His.

Oh, what manner of person ought you and I, dear brother, to be in all holy conversation and godliness.—With hearty brotherly love, ever affectionately yours,

JOHN DICKIE.

JESUS, SAVIOUR, THOU ART MINE!

“My Beloved is *mine*.”—SONG OF SOL. ii. 16.

“JESUS, Lord, I lie before Thee,  
Low in dust I worship Thee!  
Brightness of God’s awful glory,  
Thou canst stoop to worthless me,  
And ’mid seraph-songs on high,  
Bend to catch my breathéd sigh—  
Jesus, Saviour, Thou art mine!

“Son of God! Thy Father’s treasure!  
He yet gives Thee all to me:  
Angels vainly toil to measure  
What I have in having Thee.  
Grace so vast bewilders heaven;  
God to me His Christ has given—  
Jesus, Saviour, Thou art mine!

“Let life’s hours of joy or sadness  
Come and go as Thou shalt please:  
Earthly grief, or earthly gladness—  
What have I to do with these?  
Creature comforts all may flee;  
Thou art, Lord, *enough* for me—  
Jesus, Saviour, Thou art mine!

“Soul more lost ne’er lay before Thee;  
 Guilt has never louder cried:  
 Just the more in Thee I’ll glory,  
 Who for one so vile hast died;  
 Kissed me, cleansed me, made me whole  
 Wrapped Thy skirt around my soul—  
 Jesus, Saviour, Thou art mine!

“Not in heaven alone I deem Thee,  
 Lord, I feel Thy presence nigh!  
 Yea, Thy Spirit dwells within me,  
 Joins in grace’s wondrous tie;  
 Joins us so—that Thine is mine;  
 Joins us so—that mine is Thine:  
 Jesus, Saviour, Thou art mine

“Lamb of God! I’m lost in wonder,  
 When I search Thy searchless love;  
 Praises meet I fain would render,  
 Fain would sing like saints above.  
 Here, full hearts can only weep,  
 Drowned in mercy’s glorious deep—  
 Jesus, Saviour, Thou art mine!”

J. D.



### Letter No. 30.

“THE INEXPRESSIBLE GOODNESS OF GOD.”

December, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—I scribble this line to intimate the safe arrival of the air cushion, and I beg to return to the beloved, kind friend, and yourself, my very warmest and heartiest thanks. The cushions, no doubt, are very helpful to me; but incomparably more precious to me, than any

material gift or comfort, is the Christian love which prompts the kindness. May the Lord return it to your own bosom an hundred fold !

I use the cushions ceaselessly, and they have become indispensable. I could not keep the skin whole without them. The first one (two years old), is become so leaky as to be nearly useless; the second (one year old), is perfectly good—I shall replace the first with this third.

O my brother, how inexpressible the Lord's goodness is to all of us ! For me, He leaves me nothing to desire, nothing further to enjoy ; except indeed,

“ More love to Thee, O Christ,  
More love to Thee.”

And all His present innumerable and priceless mercies are only the small first fruits of an eternal harvest. For GOD IS LOVE, and He “ delighteth in mercy.”

Will you kindly convey to your dear friend (who I hope is well), my heartiest thanks, with love, and accept the same from yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.

*P.S.*—I got a present of a stylographic pen, which enables me to write lying on my back much more easily than the common pen.

“ 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For, God of love, it found out me.”

## Letter No. 31.

“TO PLEASE GOD, AND NOTHING ELSE.”

Irvine, December, 1885.

My ever dear Brother,—I am glad to see that you seem to be so well. How wonderful is the Lord's unfailing goodness! You will miss, for a little while, your dear old aunt; but a removal like hers is not to be lamented. Both ability to serve or to enjoy had passed away from her, and it was a mercy to release the weary, foot-sore pilgrim. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord”—far more blessed than are the living; though blind, human wisdom, cannot see it. Oh, if our faith were but clear enough, and strong enough to discern, as we well might, the glories of Emmanuel's land! if we realised only how very much better it is to depart and be WITH CHRIST; we should need to pray daily for resignation and patience, not to die, but to *live*, present in this body of humiliation, and absent from the Lord. Often do I catch myself repeating these lines:—

“Go, and dig my grave to-day!  
Weary of my wanderings all,  
Now from earth I pass away,  
Since the heavenly voices call;  
Angel voices from above  
Calling me to rest and love.



“Go, and dig my grave to-day !  
Homeward all my footsteps tend,  
And I lay my staff away,  
Here, where all things earthly end.  
And I lay my weary head  
On earth's only painless bed.”

But we may as little selfishly desire death, as selfishly shrink from it. The grand thing is that, while living, we should live wholly to the Lord, and when He calls us to die, we should die only to the will of God (Rom. xiv. 8).

I desire to bear on my heart, continually, the constraining recollection that I have NO ERRAND in this world whatever, save this one—TO PLEASE GOD, my *God*; WHOSE I AM and WHOM I SERVE (Acts xxvii. 23), and this, whether in living or in dying, I have nothing else to think of, or to aim at, or to care for—NOTHING ELSE. But I am to please Him perfectly, to please Him in everything; to please Him, whatever it costs me—and it *will* cost us something to please Him—it will cost us much, nay, it will cost us (that is, our flesh), its actual ALL (Luke xiv. 26-33).

And we shall never succeed in thus pleasing God unless we constantly aim at doing so, and tremblingly watch against all neglect or shortcoming; nay, unless I continually receive His own gracious

help so to live. Oh, my brother, may the Divine testimony about you and me be at the end, as it was of Enoch, *that we pleased God* ! (Heb. xi. 5).

What a heaven on earth it is to be enabled to live on a pitch like this ! There are many lawful joys within our reach, but can any of them match in sweetness the joy of GIVING PLEASURE to the blessed, the happy God ? and yet, alas ! how commonly, how universally almost, is the opportunity sold for some miserable "morsel of meat," some mere fraction of "thirty pieces of silver."

Perhaps an idea widely prevails that we, in our day, are not so favourably circumstanced for a profound and influential knowledge of Christ, and for the fullest enjoyment of gracious influences in general, as those were who looked into His very face, and felt the gentle touch of His very hands. I believe this is a mistaken notion ; the case is far otherwise. How few of those who saw Him saw any beauty in Him (Isa. liii. 2, 3) ; the sight of Him, by the bodily eye, did not manifest to them His true glory ; it only concealed it. No, the glory of Jesus is to be seen only by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, and by this supernatural revelation as made within ourselves ; and grace in all its workings is altogether the operation of the Holy Ghost

*in our hearts* ; from which it follows, that we, now on earth, are just as favourably circumstanced in every way for attaining the heights of Christian privilege, as were any of our Lord's contemporaries. Nay, in respect of opportunities, we come not one whit behind the very chiefest apostles. Oh, my brother ! let us open our mouths *wide*, and WIDER, and WIDER, and let us pant, with eagerness of desire, that God may fill them (Ps. lxxxi. 10 ; cxix. 131).

I must pause. I have been very weak of late, frailer than usual, but it is all the lovely and beloved will of God.—With hearty love, affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 32.

“THE LORD IS VERY PITIFUL.”

8th January, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—It was again a great pleasure for me to receive your welcome letter of New Year's Day, and to hear of yourself and of Mr. B——, and of Mr. P——. As you quote, “The Lord is very pitiful,” and he sees all things most truly who sees everything radiant with the glory of the Divine goodness,

I have been very poorly of late—more so than usual; with the long sleepless nights, full of pain, and with such a state of brain that I felt incapable of mental exercise. But all this is part of the most wise and lovely plan of the “VERY PITIFUL LORD,” and when one cannot enjoy the delights of communion with God, in the forms of it which involve activity of mind, one can none the less rest in the sweet enjoyment of “perfect peace” (Isa. xxvi. 3) in His blessed presence, uttering a hearty “AMEN” to His perfect and most lovely will. Indeed He has been teaching me some most valuable lessons about communion with Him, and the true way of carrying it on, which I never knew before, and which I think are not generally known.

Your suggested text, “The Lord is very pitiful,” has been very sweet to me; and one night especially my protracted meditation on it was very savoury. Oh is there anything that can match, in its sweetness, the enjoyments of the soul when contemplating the glories of the blessed God, when the Holy Spirit opens the eyes to discern clearly those glories, and the heart to relish and enjoy the ravishment of the wonderful vision; yea, when the *Lord Himself* comes in to manifest Himself to the adoring soul, to *sup* with it, and to have it *sup with*

*Him?* (Rev. iii. 20). As Rutherford says, "When the King visits me, and He and His poor prisoner are together in the house of wine, the weight of the black cross ceases to feel as heavy as a single feather." Oh, my brother, you have often felt it to be so, and so have even most unworthy I!

The words of James v. 11 are strong and clear. Pitiful means "*full* of pity," and this God is in the highest degree. He is *very* pitiful. A *little* may suffice to fill your heart, or mine, to fulness; but think of what is needed to *fill* God's heart! Well, it is *full* of pity; nay, it is very full; nay, in addition to this, He is full of mercy—of tender mercy; the quality of His pity being as notable as the amount of it.

And we need to be told this fact, for we would never learn it of ourselves from what we see, or what we experience of life. Oh, the sorrows, the sufferings, the horrors, almost of this world of breaking hearts! If we were simply to reason about it, some of us would never infer that God is *very* pitiful, is pitiful at all! AH, BUT HE IS. When a father has to deal with very foolish and stubborn children, he is constrained to act in a way that does not seem to them to be pitiful, though it is so. And the Lord's children are very foolish,

very stubborn. When a sovereign has to deal with lawless rebels he has to act with severity, however pitiful he really may be ; and the Lord's subjects are very lawless and rebellious. When a physician has to meet acute and dangerous disease in a patient, he has to employ sharp and painful remedies ; and we, as patients of the Great Physician, need all the severity that our skilful doctor employs.

In truth, so great is His pity, that it is utterly incredible to man—it goes beyond our power to comprehend it. It needs an actual new birth to make a man capable of believing it at all ; and even then, at the very best, we believe it, alas, so very little.

So great is it, in truth, that God would rather give us a *great* blessing than a *smaller* one ; He would rather give us a hundred mercies than a single one. He urges us, “Open thy mouth *wide*, and I will fill it” (Ps. lxxxi. 10). Nay, He promises to open the windows of heaven, and pour out on the receptive soul such abundance of blessing that it will be impossible to take it all in (Mal. iii. 10).

What may we not expect from His pity, who became man for this, among other ends, that He might the more tenderly pity, and the more efficiently help us !

Let us dwell much and often on this lovely aspect of God's character. It is the dread of God's judgments that wakens up the obdurate sinner; but it is the sweet enjoyments of His tender mercy that melts, and strengthens, and constrains the saint. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14). The ravishing contemplation of God's holy mercy in Christ Jesus, and the delightful rest of heart and soul in it, does a thousand times more to sanctify the believer than any amount of morbid dwelling on sin, or of gazing, as it were into hell. At the same time, a strong faith in this marvellous Divine pity sweetly co-operates with a deep, powerful conviction of the enormity of our personal guilt as sinners, in drawing the whole heart to Jesus, and fixing it firmly there. Our sins seem to our eyes when enlightened, to be infinite in number and heinousness; but the sweet pity of God is actually infinite in its greatness and its tenderness (Ps. ciii. 11).

And with what unshrinking confidence of faith should we leave ourselves to this *very* pitiful One! With what unbounded patience and resignation should we accept His chastisements, quite fully assured that "The Pitiful" cannot overdo the discipline of sorrow; and if His treatment of us

seems to be severe, let us see in this fact only the greatness of His pity, and also the virulence of our inveterate disease which demands such vigorous treatment.

But we must not abuse the consolatory truth. How awful to know that in spite of this Divine pity the whole world shall be condemned (1 Cor. xi. 32; 1 John v. 19). Nay, that among the multitude, even of professors, only a few shall reach eternal life (Matt. vii. 13, 14); *ONLY A FEW*. How awful to muse on such words as those of Heb. x. 31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" of this *same pitiful Lord!*

And the saints need the constant recognition of this to sustain self-denial and watchfulness, and to incite to prayer, and effort to save the lost. Paul so used it, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men."—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

*P.S.*—You sometimes remember me on your knees, dear brother; will you concentrate your generous petitions for me on one single point—that the Lord may fit me for, and sustain me in, the lowly service to which He has called me, and may make it serviceable for His glory.



I feel the more and more impressed with a sense of its great importance, and am the more and more drawn out in earnest desire to be enabled to discharge it; but I feel the more, and still the more, to a discouraging degree, my unfitness for it, and the need of continual Divine help (Jas. i. 6).

Did I ever tell you what I take my present lowly service to the Lord to consist of?

It lies, *first*, in offering to God continually the sacrifice of praise (Heb. xiii. 15). In heaven they understand its importance—it is their main work day and night; but there is little of it here (Ps. cvii. 8). He has set me apart for it—to praise Him for all that HE IS—all that He does; to praise Him on behalf of *the world*, and of *the Church*.

It lies, *secondly*, in prayer; and this too “without ceasing” (1 Thess. v. 17), especially intercessory prayer in behalf of *all men* (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2), of all saints (Eph. vi. 18), and especially of all Gospel ministry.

It lies, *thirdly*, in aiming continually at giving pleasure to God in *all* that I do. Oh what a grand service is this if one could attain to it through Divine grace! (1 Cor. x. 31). Not to please self at all (Rom. xv. 1, 3), or one’s fellows (Gal. i. 10), but God (2 Tim. ii. 4).

And, *fourthly*, it lies in enjoying God, in finding all fulness of joy in Him alone. He counts this a service to Him. He means our joy to be *full*. Oh, my brother, you would pray for me if you knew how incompetent I am for this holy, heaven-like calling.

I am both humbled and encouraged when I think of him who felt, "I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xx. 24), and who just before he died, could write, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. iv. 7).

Or of the infinitely greater One, who just before death, said to His Father, "I have *finished* the work Thou gavest Me to do!"

And has not this Blessed One said to you, and to me, as distinctly as He did to Paul of old, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9).

May God bless you, my dear brother! J. D.



## Letter No. 33.

“HE COMFORTS ME ON EVERY SIDE.”

February, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—I have been very poorly of late, more so than formerly, since the middle of December; and, most so, the past two or three weeks. I will not trouble you with details. Much pain, much weakness, and, far the most distressing, an intensely irritable condition of brain, that makes me feel as if I would go distracted; it prevents sleep, for want of which I am sorely worn out.

But the Lord fulfils to me His word in 2 Cor. xii. 9. Oh how delightful His loving-kindness is to me! “Of sinners the chief, and greater than all.” He “comforts me on every side.” He knows exactly what I need to keep me clinging with both hands to my blessed Redeemer, and He sends me that very thing;—and, besides this, He adds His sweetening blessing to it. “The cup which My Father giveth Me, shall I not cheerfully drink it,” John xviii. 11; especially since He blessed the cup ere He put it into my hand.

I cannot just now write more, and am unwilling to detain this for a day or two, in order, if spared, to write more. I hope you feel well, dear brother.



## Letter No. 34.

“ALL OUR JOY TO BE IN GOD ALONE.”

February, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—I fondly hope that you feel somewhat stronger than when you wrote, and that your deafness may be passing away. And still more am I wishful that you have had a profitable as well as a delightful season, in being kept for a little in the place of special teaching.

I am long about answering your valued letter, and shall write you very briefly even now, as I am very much exhausted. I will not detail; only that God has appointed me days and nights of utter weakness, weariness, and pain. “Even so, Father, even so; since it seemeth good in Thy sight.”

He means our joy to be *full*; but it is to be purely and simply joy *in* HIM. Whatever we add *to Him* as a reason for our rejoicing not only debases the character of our joy, but diminishes its fulness. God, along with something else, affords really less joy to the believing heart than *God alone* and by Himself can do; and the more it is that we add to Him, the more earthly does the joy become in quality and the more reduced in quantity.

Let all your joy and mine be only and altogether IN GOD ALONE (Hab. iii. 17, 18, 19).

But I must close. God bless you, my beloved brother, and make you a blessing.—Yours in love,  
J. DICKIE.

---

### Letter No. 35.

“THE LORD FULFILS HIS MAGNIFICENT PROMISES.”

May, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—I was heartily thankful to see from your kind letter that your cold had left you, and your deafness was also going. They were sent you as the bearers of a special blessing; and I trust they have left you consciously the richer for their visit (Rom. viii. 28). I must thank you once more for your welcome letter. It is a true kindness for you to write to me; and I believe the Lord will not overlook it (Matt. xxv. 40; x. 42; Heb. vi. 10).

You can scarcely conceive how complete my seclusion is, and has been for three years. Virtually I am dead and buried, with no link to connect me with my fellows, save a letter from yourself, and, say, other two friends. You can scarcely think how much I prize them, how much they cheer me.

I have been very, very, weakly of late. Oh,

I have been weak ! Some of these days, even since I got your letter, I could only lie utterly prostrated, unable to read or to think ; and, with the long, long, monotonous day filled up with bodily suffering. Of course I am always alone, and from year's end to year's end never sit at all.

But, O my brother ! the Lord fulfils to me magnificently His most magnificent promises. He is so with me that His presence more, *much more*, than sweetens my cup. It is the wood, which when cast into my Marah-well, turns the bitter into delicious drink (Exod. xv. 25).

I had a restless night, last night ; and, if I were a little stronger I should have tried to scribble down the merest gleaning of some of the delightful meditation which He favoured me with ; but I cannot attempt it.

O my brother ! such sweet seasons stimulate the soul to the hearty resolve of David,—“ONE thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord,” etc.

None but Christ ! None but Christ !—But I must conclude, with hearty love, yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.

**Letter No. 36.****"THE FATHER'S LOVE."**

June, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—Your kind and welcome letter reached me yesterday, and I begin a reply at once. I am very thankful, indeed, to hear so favourably of your health; like everything else, it is a talent to be laid out in trading for God.

Thank you very heartily for your suggestive list of passages in "As" and "So." They are very, very precious. Oh, how enriching is the Bible when its incalculable treasures are appropriated by a hearty faith. The wealth of this world is but poverty beside it. David knew what the riches of earth were (see 1 Chron. xxii. 14-16), but he delighted in a better wealth. "The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. cxix. 72).

I have been musing on one of your passages (Ps. ciii. 13), and purpose, if spared, to go over them all. It is most delightful to let some precious Word of God lie and soak, as it were, in the mind, and diffuse its sweetness and strength all through the soul. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet"—"I will be glad in the Lord" (Ps. civ. 34). And what, therefore, can possibly be so



interesting to us as the love of God *to ourselves*. It is a perfect amazement the more we think on it, and the more worthily we are enabled to think. It seems incredible both for its *immensity* and its freeness; and it would be daring folly to think of it as true, if we were not assured of it on such evidence, that it were the height of wickedness to cherish any doubt of it. How wonderfully are its blessed marvels set before us in the Word of God; but, for the suitable enjoyment of them, we need to explore the immense field, search out and search into, the discovered treasures; travel (under the Spirit's guidance) over the lengths and breadths; climb the high heights; and plunge into the bottomless depths of that love, which, the more we know of it, is the more clearly seen by us to pass all knowledge. Prov. ii. 1-6 should be our rule in such researches; researches which, when so prosecuted, could not fail to be successful, and when successful would overwhelm us with delighted amazement; or, as Peter words it, make us "rejoice with joy *unspeakable* and full of glory."

"God is love;" infinite, essential, everlasting Love; and when Love loveth, what shall the manner and the measure of it be? (1 John iii. 1; iv. 8-16). We need never fear that the love of this God, Who

is Love, shall ever fail, if we only do not neglect, or reject it. A mother may cease to love, but God will not (Isa. xlix. 15). He changes not (Mal. iii. 6). And this is our only rest.

“Man may dismiss compassion from his breast,  
But God will never.”

Every word in the text (Ps. ciii. 13) is suggestive of profitable meditation, if only we had time to enter into it. “AS A FATHER.” He compares His love elsewhere to a mother’s (see Isa. xlix. 15), but most frequently to a father’s. A mother’s love may be deep and tender, but it rarely is free from *fondness*—that foolish weakness of love which makes her often spoil her child. But God’s love has no *fondness* in it; it is infinite, inconceivable, but there is not a particle of false pity, or of foolish fondness—there is no trace of either in Law, or Gospel, or in His holy providence. See what sore affliction this loving Father often lays on the children of His love.

And how suggestive the word “pitieth” is! How touchingly it speaks of the sorrowful circumstances of our present condition AS HIS CHILDREN, that His love for us takes the form of pity. This, however, does not hinder the very sharpest discipline, if need be.

Only a *humble* heart can be thankful *to be pitied*. Pride will not stoop to it. The unbroken spirit would rather want the love than have it in the shape of pity. But, O my brother, the blessed marvel to you and me is, that, we being what we are, with every single evil that is in hell to be found (in germ at least) in our hearts, that God can so love us,—with His whole heart and His whole soul (Jer. xxxii. 41). In fact, what is the great Gospel ministration presently being carried on but just God's careful search for such sinful souls as shall be willing to let themselves be flooded—be overflowed—with the manifestation of His love (Isa. xliv. 2-3). But it is the LOVE itself, and not its gifts, that is so sweet to the gracious soul.

What a dreadful thing it is, my brother, to know about this love, and to talk about it familiarly, without making a due response to it. Mere doctrinal knowledge about it only hardens. And as a matter of fact, most persons know of it only to abuse it—and it is abused, unless it leads to our love in return. Whenever it is rightly used it secures our *obedience* (John xiv. 21); it secures our whole-hearted and unreserved consecration (2 Cor. v. 14, 15); it secures our entire deliver-

ance from all love of the world and its things (1 John ii. 15, 16); it secures that we very heartily love our fellows (1 John iv. 20, 21).

Some precious thoughts occurred to me musing on the text through the night, but I cannot in my brief scribble enter into them. They were in connection with the Divine Fatherhood. We should think of God's love to the members of Christ, as something infinitely far above, and beyond, the love of the Creator for His beloved creatures—of God's love, for instance, for the very brightest of His angels! It is a different thing altogether; it is the love of a father for a dearly-beloved child; it is the love of the Infinite Father for His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Yes, indeed, it is the very same love which rests on Jesus that rests also, and equally, on every one given by the Father to Jesus (John xvii. 26). They are as near to His heart, and as tenderly thought of. O brother, my heart swells at the astounding thought, and I feel as is spoken in Ezek. xvi. 63. How fitting, then, that our love should not be merely the love of a creature to its Bountiful Creator, but the love of a son to its father—the love of Jesus to His Father. May God give me this, whatever else He gives, or withholds, or takes away. May He fill me with holy

love to Himself.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

*P.S.*—I find that I have omitted to say how I am as to bodily health—in truth, I always grudge words on a subject so unworthy. I have been, on the whole, much about the same, with a tendency towards improvement; but this was checked three weeks ago, and I have been very feeble; only now do I begin to recruit a little. It was occasioned, I doubt not, by a visit from my beloved P——, whom I had not seen for about sixteen months, though he had come to ask for me about twenty times, or more, in this space. I thought I would see him this time; and my sister warned him to stay a short time. He did so, but it was very exciting to me, as if in BRAIN fever, followed by a series of bad nights, which depressed me very much.

Externally my life is very wearisome; alone, alone, alone; with no occupation, and nothing to relieve the monotony of my thoughts. But it is the dear will of God that so it should be; and with all my heart I most cordially say “Amen” to whatever He is pleased to appoint me. He is good, always good, only good, and nothing but good can come out of that Hand—that Heart of Love.

It is now over three years since He shut me up

in my Patmos—and He has, and is, and will make it a *time of loves*. He has led me aside into the wilderness in order to speak to my heart, and sweetly, wonderfully is he doing it (Hosea ii. 14). I shall rapturously praise Him for it in eternity—now, without the rapture, I heartily praise Him.

Everything is right, and just as it ought to be, when it is the working out of His dear and lovely will.

Of late my mind seems getting weaker and weaker; it must be so, through the extreme weakness of my body. “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.”

#### A LOWLY LIFE-PSALM.

“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.”—Ps. lxxiii. 25.

“ALL gone, all gone, for this life gone,

My days of health and strength;

Wearied and worthless, glad were I

To welcome home at length:

And yet I'm happier far in truth

Than e'er I was in buoyant youth;

For, JESUS, thou art *more* to me

Than health and strength and youth could be.

“All gone, all gone, for this life gone,

Dear hopes most fondly nursed;

They glittered long around my path,

Till each bright bubble burst.

I wept; but oh! the blest despair

Has led me heaven's own joys to share;

For, JESUS, Thou art *more* to me

Than Hope's fond dreams fulfilled could be.

“All gone, all gone, for this life gone,  
My soul's elastic spring ;  
Of vigour stript, I shrink aside  
A crushed and useless thing :  
Yet this is gain ; for thus I prove  
Far more His patient, pitying love ;  
And sweeter, safer this to me  
Than self-reliant strength could be.

“And going fast, while most are gone,  
Lov'd friends of early days ;  
The world grows stranger year by year ;  
I lose, but not replace.  
'Tis well ! I'm cast the more on One ;  
Stars scarce are missed while shines the Sun ;  
And, JESUS, Thou art *more* to me  
Than lov'd and loving hearts could be.

“Dear Lord, I thankful kiss the hand  
That gently stripped me bare,  
And laid me on Thy tender breast,  
To lose my sorrow there :  
'Twas anguish when earth's cup was spill'd,  
But now with Thee 'tis overfill'd ;  
For, JESUS, Thou art *more* to me  
Than all earth's brimming cups could be.

“What grace ! to show a soul so vile  
Thy more than mother's care,  
And lead through wreck of earth's poor joys  
Thy joys with Thee to share.  
What grace ! that Thou to such hast given  
The foretaste now of feast in heaven ;  
The foretaste even now to me,  
More than a thousand worlds could be.”

J. D.



**Letter No. 37.**

“MY BELOVED IS MINE, AND I AM HIS.”

July, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—I had the great pleasure of receiving your letter this morning, and learning of your continued welfare. May our heavenly Father bless your sojourn in Arran for the establishment of your bodily vigour. I fondly hope that you left friends in Dublin well, and found your friends in Arran well. May the Lord help us to be duly thankful for His goodness to ourselves in bestowing blessings on our friends. These blessings to our dear ones constitute a very large portion indeed of our own cup of joy.

Thank you, my brother, for your passages of Holy Scripture. Your reference to the “Song” stirs my heart like the blast of a trumpet. This beautiful and precious little book is associated with some of my sweetest and most delightful reminiscences. My more intimate acquaintance with it began about thirty years ago. I was unwell, and very sleepless. Mourning the waste of my long night-watching in wandering thoughts, I thought it might be useful to me to choose a verse of Scripture on lying down, and then I would have it on my mind for medita-



tion whenever I should be awake. At last I took the Song of Solomon, verse by verse, one verse each night, till I went through it all; and most profitable did I find these midnight musings, with prayer to be enabled to understand the wonderful symbols, and to apply the truths revealed to my own heart. And I went through it still more minutely a second time, not long before my health broke down three years ago. I had got into the habit for many years of rising every morning, summer and winter, at four o'clock, and spending the first four hours of every day in study of the Word and devotion. Oh, my brother, what sweet memories I have of these precious morning hours! though I have no doubt the much too little sleep I took helped to bring my brain into its present condition. Among other portions of Scripture I went over the Song of Solomon very minutely, spending on it about three hours every day for five or six months. Let me commend to you this way of studying the Scriptures, only don't rise at four o'clock to do it. We are not permitted to sin against our own bodies.

It seems very clear to me that the Song is a wonderfully elaborate and perfectly sustained allegory, setting before us the holy and unequalled love between the Lord Jesus and His Bride, which is the

great body, the Church. On no account are we to think of the individual soul of any single believer as the Bride ; it takes *the whole body* to make up her entire unity. The love set before us in this marvellous Book (a poem which for wealth of imagery stands unique in literature) is married love—the love of bridegroom and bride who have been recently made one. And every separate item in the details represents to us a separate suggestion of spiritual truth. We have the same impressive figure, setting forth the same truths, in the 45th Psalm, and in other Scriptures ; and we have the same magnificent truth set before us, with much less of the figurative, —indeed, in a form almost literal—in the 5th chapter of Ephesians verse 22 to close.

Oh, my brother, let us satiate our souls with full draughts of this incomparable love of Jesus, most heartily believed in, and most confidently appropriated ! Like Rutherford, let us say, “ I would drink a sea full of Christ’s love ere ever I would let the cup go from my hand ; ” and again, “ An hour’s kissing of Christ is worth a world of worlds.”

My eye falls on verse 16 of the 2nd chapter you refer to. “ My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Oh, what wonderful words are these to be uttered by dust and ashes ! Why are we burdened with

trifling sorrows when we are warranted to encourage ourselves in the Lord after this fashion? (1 Sam. xxx. 6). “Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?” when thou canst venture to say of the Son of God that He is thy Beloved, and that He is thy very own?

How delightful it is to be beloved by a worthy person! but it is far, far more delightful *to love* than even to be beloved. But who can conceive the full joy of being Christ's Beloved, and of having Him for our Beloved? It is love unspeakable that is the great tie between Him and His people—a love that makes Himself, and all that He has, *MINE*; and that makes me, and all that I have, *His*! He is mine now; mine wholly; mine *FOR EVER*. He is *mine*, as nothing else is mine; I am *His*, as nothing else is *His*. Angels, indeed, and all things are *His*; but I am *His* far more than any of these can be. He made them indeed (John i. 3); but He did not redeem them to Himself by His blood; He does not live *within them* as He does in me (Gal. ii. 20).

And, oh, what have I in having Him as mine? He has in Himself all the fulness of God (Col. ii. 9); and He is mine! He sits on the throne of the universe, and He is mine! I am not almighty nor

omniscient; but *He is*, and He is mine! O brother let us aim, by God's grace, to live as becomes those who have Jesus to be their Beloved and their own! Let us live in the joy of it; in the consecration which becomes the relationship; in the unworldliness and self-denial which are inseparable from the full faith of it. And let us joyfully remember that this is the great work of the Holy Spirit, first to unite to Jesus and us to one another, and then to draw the bonds of union ever closer and closer.

But I must close.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,  
J. DICKIE.

*P.S.*—Forgive, please, the preceding scribble. I feel ashamed to send it, though I think I may venture it to you. I often fall on the floor from extreme weakness. I have fallen twice within three weeks, and the violent shake of the fall affects my brain greatly, which makes me more stupid. But it is the will of my God and Lord, and this is more than enough.

It has taken me a full week to write this, a little bit every day; so I know you will excuse me if my letter seems stupid.—Yours heartily in Christ our Lord,  
J. D.

## Letter No. 38.

"LAID TENDERLY IN HIS BOSOM."

September, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—I am glad to see you seem to be so well. The Lord is, oh, how good ! He gives you a little strength, and to me a great deal of weakness ; and He so deals with us both in love unutterable. Oh, may He enable us to enjoy Him in all, and to use all for His glory alone !

I have to take my small allowance of reading and of sweet exercise of mind only in *drops* at a time, and with intervals between. I had several turns of utter exhaustion, and felt as if life were just going away. But oh, He is sweetly with me ! and how unutterably sweet for extreme weakness to be laid to rest in the softest, warmest, tenderest Bosom in all the universe ; and this is my portion just now. "He washes my steps with butter, and the rock pours me out rivers of oil" (Job xxix. 6).

Never before was He so near to me as now—never so laid tenderly in His bosom—never so kissed with the kisses of His mouth—never so comforted after the manner of a comforting mother (Isa. lxvi. 13).

The Lord's infinite condescending loving-kindness

fills me with amazement, awe, and joy. The cream of my life has been the last three years, but the last three *months* have been the cream of the cream ! Oh, what will eternity be !

My heart is full ; my hands are full ; my mouth is full ; my joy is full ; my cup is full—nay, it runneth over (Ps. xxiii. 5), and the run of the waste-pipe (as it were) might satisfy the cravings of a thousand poor creatures like me.

But I must stop. May God ever bless you, brother !—With heartiest love, ever yours,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 39.

“GOD’S GOODNESS IN AFFLICTING.”

October, 1886.

My dear, dear Brother,—Thanks, with all my heart, for your kind letter, full of sweet Bible words. Your true brotherly sympathy has been, all through, a great solace to me. May the Lord, who “scorns to be any man’s debtor,” return it all to you, both directly and through kind human hearts (Ps. xli. 1-3, margin), when your own day of need shall overtake you. You little know how soothing a brother’s sympathy is to one stripped as

bare as I am—off whose fig tree the very bark has been stript (Joel i. 7). I can now enter a little more into the great depth of our blessed Redeemer's sorrow when He cried, as in Ps. lxix. 20, than I was once able to do.

I fondly hope that the beloved Mr. B—— and Mr. P—— and Miss B—— are all well. They are all very dear to me.

I am very much about the old point—a great deal weaker since I had that shock—and feeling, perhaps, more than before, the approach of winter ; but everything is appointed me in infinite love and mercy, and the Lord helps me to welcome heartily His most blessed will. I cannot tell you His wonderful goodness to me — a chief, and most unworthy sinner. I speak of His goodness, not in spite of my affliction, but through it, and by means of the affliction ; but chiefly through it. He is, indeed, making every circumstance of it work for my good (Rom. viii. 28), and, I do hope, making them work for His own glory in some divinely known way. Often do I feel with beloved Rutherford : “ I praise Him for this wald stroke, I welcome this furnace. God's wisdom made choice of it for me, and it must be best for me since He chose it.” And another sentence of this dear man

of God finds its full echo in my heart : " I sought Him ; and now a fig for all the worm-eaten pleasures, and all the moth-eaten glory out of heaven, since I have found Him, and, in Him, all I can want or wish. Christ hath given me the marriage kiss, and He hath got my marriage love. We have made up a full bargain between us ; and it shall not go back on either side." Oh, my brother, " None but Christ—none but Christ ! " as the dying Lambert cried out of the flames.

I am unable to read as much as I used to do, and, of course, am cast more exclusively on a little reading of, and meditating on, holy Scripture. And the Lord opens it up wonderfully to my understanding, while He applies it most delightfully to my heart. For, is He not the God of ALL grace ? grace which goes infinitely beyond our sin (1 Peter v. 10 ; Rom. v. 20).

I have been happily engrossed for months, I dare say, with Gal. ii. 20 ; and only now do I begin to get a glimpse of its immensity, richness, and fulness.

But I must conclude, most affectionately commending both you and your work to the special care of our heavenly Father.—Ever yours, in His love,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 40.

"FATHER, THY WILL BE DONE."

November, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—You do not say how you are, but I infer from your silence that you are as usual. What burdens of mercies past have we to thank God for (Ps. lxxviii. 19); for the love that comforts us, and for the equally tender and bliss-giving love that chastises us.

I have to thank Him *for both* of late; and to thank Him, too, that He enables me to praise Him with some small, small measure of joy for them *both*. I have been very weak, increasingly so, since winter set in, and know not the issue. The Lord has a loving plan about me, which, I trust, He will enable me to welcome. "Father, Thy will be done."

You must not forget, please, to convey my heartfelt thanks to your aged friend, who did me the high honour to send me her Christian love. Both the love and the prayers I set a very high value on, indeed; next to the Lord's own love, would I prize that of His children; though, alas! alas! I am infinitely unworthy of either.

Rather than keep this scribble longer I shall

send it off now—having, already, delayed too long. Will you forgive this poor, brief, cold, empty chatter?

Commending you most warmly to the “sufficient grace” (2 Cor. xii. 9), of the Lord Jesus.—Yours  
in hearty, brotherly love, J. DICKIE.

“I cannot bear Thine absence, Lord,  
My life expires if Thou depart ;  
Be thou, my heart, still near my God,  
And Thou, my God, still near my heart.”



## Letter No. 41.

“THE BELIEVER IS TO LOVE AS CHRIST LOVES.”

December, 1886.

My ever dear Brother,—Most deep and heartfelt thanks for your exceedingly kind letter, received last night. I lose no time in beginning a reply, and shall notice the business part of it first.

Please do not think any more of a cushion. They are not so necessary to me as hitherto. They have been perfectly invaluable to me in past years ; but since I was struck with palsy, I am kept close in bed, and can no longer lie on the cushions in an

easy chair for a change. But thank you, dear brother, all the same.

And most special and hearty thanks for your precious texts and suggestive hints on them. That of John xiii. 1, the Lord made to me a most delightful "feast of fat things" for several sleepless nights not long ago. He opened it up and applied it with a clearness and power, and a fulness of consolation, which I can never forget. Oh, the love of God through Christ! what an entrancing field of contemplation for faith to explore, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—climbing up into the sublime heights, and plunging down into the fathomless depths, and losing one's-self in the ocean-like lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge (Eph. iii. 18, 19). And then how enriching are our wonderful discoveries; for faith appropriates them all, every one, and enjoys them all, and is "filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19).

But it awes me to find that I am to be not only the happy receiver of ALL the unmeasured love of Christ, but that I am to show out that same love to others; walking towards them in the same self-sacrificing love (Eph. v. 2). I am to wash their feet (John xiii. 14, 15); and, in general, to love

others according to the measure of His love to me (John xiii. 34). Nay, I am to carry this love so far as to lay down life like Him (1 John iii. 16). And my love is to lavish its richness on every one, with no exception. I am to LOVE, LOVE, LOVE my enemies, and meet them with prayers and blessings; perfect in love, even as God is (Matt. v. 44, 48). And if this be not my spirit, my spirit is the same base, earthly, selfish spirit with that of the vilest of men (Matt. v. 46, 47). Nor is this love a mere excellence that it is better to have than to want—it is the spirit of life, the new life. If I lack it, I lack the one thing needful, whatever else I seem to have (1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3).

Oh, brother, all this lays me on my face before God, humbled, penitent, and confessing, pleading the promise in Luke xi. 13, and seeking to be filled with the spirit of Jesus, which spirit is love. For if “any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. viii. 9); and no man has this spirit unless he is actually led by it.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,  
J DICKIE.



## Letter No. 42.

"BROTHERLY LOVE."

December, 1886.

My dear, dear Brother,—You really make me bankrupt, and compel me to declare my insolvency! I do not know how to thank you for your great kindness. May He who inspires it Himself recompense it.

But I need nothing save a loving, humble, and holy heart; and, just as you would kindly interest yourself for me to ask from dear Mr. —— something that you thought I needed, will you, my beloved brother, ask for me, from our gracious Lord, a heart as above?

I fully believe you when you say it would be a pleasure to you to aid my comfort in any way. Let me beg you to enjoy this pleasure very abundantly, for your most loving brotherly sympathy has all along been an unspeakable solace and delight to me. I rejoice in it, not merely for my own sake, but as desiring fruit that may abound to your account (Phil. iv. 17).

I need not say how very heartily I say "Amen" to your remarks on Christian union and brotherly love. I do not think that you could name any other subject so fitted to awaken in me such deep

feeling of grief and personal shame, or to draw out my heart in such "vehement desire" (2 Cor. vii. 11), though it can only vent itself in "groanings which cannot be uttered." Oh, my leanness! my leanness! may the Lord fill me, **FILL ME**, with "fervent love," that is *boiling hot* (1 Peter iv. 8) for since He makes it the main point of my duty, I will make it the main point of my prayers, love to God Himself, love to my Redeemer, love to every saint, love to every human being.

And love is HIS GIFT now and here, His very grandest gift. I would covet *earnestly* all His good and precious gifts, but, most earnestly of all, this highest, most Christ-like grace of love (1 Cor. xii. 31). There is not a particle of it in the natural heart. There is a sentiment which passes in the world by this name; an instinct, too, of natural affection, and a sort of benevolence of disposition which pass for love; but they are not even akin to the love of the New Testament. It is supernatural, the special creation in the soul by the Holy Spirit. God Himself is LOVE—not *feels* it or *shows* it merely—but is *Himself* love! And in making us children of His own, He communicates to us His very nature which is love (Eph. v. 1, 2; Matt. v. 44-48). Hence the new

nature is spoken of as DIVINE (2 Peter i. 4), and only in this way can we ever attain to any degree or any increase of love. Alas, alas, alas, my brother, for the millions of professing Christians who are destitute of this peculiar love! Whatever else a man may have, or whatever he may do, if he lacks this, he lacks all (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3).

But I must pause.—With many thanks and hearty love, ever affectionately yours, J. DICKIE.

#### COMMUNION.

“They that feared the Lord spake often ONE TO ANOTHER.”  
--MAL. iii. 16.

“Commune with YOUR OWN HEART.”—Ps. iv. 4.

“It is good for me to DRAW NEAR TO GOD.”—Ps. lxxiii. 28.

“How sweet communion is with saints,  
For soul can soul inspire;  
The brand that soon goes out alone,  
With others makes a fire:  
So 'tis our Father's will that we  
Should heav'nward march in company.

“But just as blessed 'tis to know  
And commune with one's heart;  
The hidden Manna there to eat,  
When Jesus draws apart:  
For while they lose who keep at home  
They lose much more who *always* roam.

“But oh, 'tis surely best of all,  
To commune with our Lord;  
To breathe our secrets in his ear  
And catch His whispered word:  
One hour with God is better far,  
Than years of toil without Him are

“Then let me prize Communion dear  
With loved ones on the road,  
But prize as well the hour alone,  
And *most* the hour with God :  
Eager to seize each help that’s given,  
And forward press in haste for heaven.”

J. D.



### Letter No. 43.

“TRAINING FOR HEAVEN.”

January, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—Most cordially do I endorse your estimate of that most sweet little song, the twenty-third psalm, and am in the fullest possible agreement with your remarks on it. With its holy words filling the soul, and a joyous faith in the Shepherd’s love, and in the care of Him of whom it warmly speaks, the heart is kept at the singing-pitch ; though one may be led through very fire and water, he can sing in the midst of the fires (Isa. xxiv. 15).

How vastly different is this world, and life in it, to the man who sees God everywhere, and who discerns and delights in His will in everything, and who thus “walks with God” (Gen. v. 22) amid the incidents of life, from what it is to the “man of earth,” who, amid precisely the same outward circumstances,



neither discerns the Divine Presence, nor rests in the Divine love, nor worships the Divine will. The two experiences of this present life differ precisely as heaven and hell do; for though the difference between heaven and hell may be immensely greater in *degree*, it is exactly the same in *kind*.

Some souls (alas, so few) are being trained for heaven by their experience of a present minor heaven on earth; while others (alas, so many) are groping their way to the doleful bottomless pit through the dark experiences of a hell, in measure already begun.

Many thanks, my beloved brother, for all your kind expressions about myself. Most unworthy am I of any such feelings, but I most heartily reciprocate them. The dear love of the Lord or of His children I cannot but accept with wondering gratitude, and, in the clear understanding, that it is totally undeserved.

I fondly hope that you keep in your usual health; I am much as before, with a cup literally running over (Ps. xxiii. 5), and it is filled with nothing but most precious mercy.

No better lot can be the portion of any one than to lie passive in the hands of the Lord.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours, JOHN DICKIE.

“Peace, be still,  
Through the night of grief or pain !  
Meekly bow, nor strive in vain ;  
Let thy God do what He will,  
Peace, be still !

“Peace, be still,  
Let the great Physician deal  
With thy case to wound or heal ;  
Trust His never-failing skill,  
Peace, be still !”

ISAIAH lxv. 24.



### Letter No. 44.

“HANDFULS OF RICHEST MERCIES.”

February, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—It was a very great pleasure, indeed, to receive your kind letter, and to read with sincere appreciation its suggestive contents.

How full life really is of God, if only we have faith to discern His presence, and how holy and happy life becomes to us, when, by grace, we are enabled to walk with Him. Earth becomes heaven at once, and every bush around us blazes like that on Horeb (Exod. iii.) with the glory of the indwelling God.

I am delighted with your brief hint about the

handfuls dropped on purpose for Ruth to glean them. How very full, dear brother, is your life and mine, of handful on handful of richest mercies, dropped on purpose, in our way, by the order of the Lord of the field—our Great Kinsman—whose interest in us is greatly deeper than we dream of. I have been looking back at my own life and considering only a single class of these “handfuls”—viz., the educational influences made use of by God in order to train me for eternity; and of these I have confined myself to such as were not thrust upon me, but only such as were graciously placed in my way, on purpose that I might make use of them. And yet, even thus limited, the numbers of such “handfuls” swell up beneath my eye to many thousands. My God seems to have had this very end in view, daily, hourly, every moment, even since my childhood—dropping handfuls on purpose, as constantly and as carefully as if He had no one else to mind! What books He has cast in my way; what wise words from gracious men and women; what warnings in providence; what instruction; what comfort, encouragement, reproof! In fact, everything that has befallen me at all; every fellow-creature I have met, seems to have been meant, and in some measure used for my

training—to have been, in short, a handful let fall on purpose. And all this most lavish expenditure of instrumentalities has been made by One who wastes nothing (John vi. 12), and who designs the final issue of His patient labour to be such, that it shall be seen to have been most wisely expended (Zeph. iii. 14-17).

All that we need to secure this blessed life in its perfection, is that fulness and simplicity of faith, which keeps us ever in the Divine presence (Isa. xl. 31).

I find, dear brother, that all my life I have too readily satisfied myself in regard to this *supreme duty of believing*. Of all the sinner's sins, unbelief is by far the most heinous. It calls God A LIAR (1 John v. 10), and carries the daring blasphemy through the entire life, acting always on the assumption that God is false. And yet, this most daring and heinous of sins never troubles the natural man at all! His conscience takes no note of it whatever. Other sins may disturb it more or less, but this sin *never*. Yet when the Holy Spirit convicts him, it is because of this sin (John xvi. 8, 9).

And most sad and amazing is, it how very little, and how very seldom, are even Christians exercised about this enormous sin! Most of us are fearfully

guilty of it (I am for one), and yet where is the grief and the shame, the tearful confession, and the deep self-loathing repentance, which befit the perpetrators of this unequalled sin? If a Christian were to have spent yesterday in drunkenness, or in fraud, or in blasphemy, or in whoredom, how sorely pained and shaken would he be to-day? Yet for the sin of *unbelief* he is quite untroubled! All this shows how few, even of Christians, are led by the Holy Spirit. Their convictions and confessions are more due to natural conscience than to higher illumination.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. D.



### Letter No. 45.

“REQUISITES FOR ACCEPTABLE SERVICE.”

March, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—Very many thanks for your suggestive remarks on Christian serving—the one matter which, next to a man’s salvation, should be the most deeply important to him.

You do not say how you are; so I infer thankfully that you are fit for your work. I am much as before, not weaker, but certainly not stronger. The Lord’s name be praised for EVERYTHING.

Your remarks on *Mary's service* are both humbling and encouraging. Let me add just one other, that the service of every Mary, while commended by the Lord beyond all other manner of serving, never fails to be despised and condemned by her fellows (see Luke x. 38-42). Martha looks on it as mere indolence (see "Alone" in verse 40), but Jesus gave her to know that Mary's service was sweeter to Him than her own was, and in Mark xiv. 3-9, the whole twelve apostles were filled *with* INDIGNATION and anger at what they counted wicked waste ; while, in fact, it was the grandest service ever rendered to Jesus in the days of His flesh. But it is universally true, that what seems wise in the eyes of God, seems folly in the eyes of man ; and in the professing Church, as in the ancient synagogue, " that which is *highly esteemed* among men is ABOMINATION in the sight of God " (Luke xvi. 15). How utterly worthless, then, are the popular judgments on God's servants and their service ! Let us give no heed to them.

For thirty-five years past, Matt. vii. 21-23 has been as a beacon light to me, and has kept me in wholesome fear. *Firstly*, These men were zealous and laborious servants to all appearance. *Secondly*, What they did was in His name, as they thought.

*Thirdly*, Their service seemed to be crowned with success. And yet, alas, they were not serving Christ *at all*. He gave them no success, indeed, from first to last, had *never, never*, known them at all AS HIS! Instead of their expected reward for all their service, it was counted only mere *doing of iniquity*. And this is to be the case, not with a few units, but with "MANY" (verse 22).

All this cuts very deep, my brother. I will judge no man, but I will in uttermost self-jealousy cast myself on my face at my Master's feet, and lift up my beseeching cry, that He will keep poor me from such serving, such living, and such an issue.

There seems to me to be three indispensable requisites for all acceptable service. *First*, That the Lord CALL the man to it. *Second*, That the man carry it out in simple faith. And *third*, In the spirit of unreserved consecration.

The Lord must CALL, otherwise it is mere SELF-WILL and therefore SIN. Notice Paul's continual reference to this (1 Cor. i. 1, etc.). This special call is indispensable. Think of our Blessed Jesus, who He was, and what He came to earth to do, and how He spent thirty long years as a "carpenter" (Mark vi. 3); while He does not

take a single step towards fulfilling His great ministry. No ; He waits in patience till His Father bids Him rise and work. Contrast this with Moses in Exodus ii. He knew what he was appointed for, as his people's deliverer, and, under the impulse of his fervent heart, he, in self-will, began his work. But this spoiled all, and so he had to be cast aside to herd sheep for forty years, until he had learned the blessed way of "waiting" for the call of God. Doubtless, to a fervent soul, the temptation to act as he did was very great, and great, too, in the case of our dear Lord ; but *He* stood the trial and Moses did not. Only a fervent soul can know what sore temptation there is, in our own day, to SELF-APPOINTED ministry, but to yield to this is not to minister.

I have dwelt too long on this, and will not add anything on the simple faith, and the utter consecration altogether essential to all true service.

But with the Divine call for special service for the hour, and with the man's full faith and unreserved consecration to the will of God for that hour, the service is holy, and blessed, and fruitful. For this constitutes the "single eye" of Matt. vi. 22, which fills the man with heaven's own light. As to the path of duty, such a servant is sure to



find it ; and as to the accomplishment of it, whatever hinders, he is sure to succeed (Matt. xvii. 20), for God leads him step by step, and he, being full of faith, follows the Divine leading (Rom. viii. 14). and God strengthens him moment by moment, and makes his strength perfect in weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10), so that (Phil. iv. 13) is amply realised by him. How then can he fail ? For, seeing everything in the light of God's presence, he discerns his own ignorance and impotence ; but, full of faith, he looks to his loving and trusted Father for needed grace and strength (Ps. cxliii. 9). And it is impossible that *such* a prayer, from *such* a man, for *such* an object, should not be granted exceedingly above all he could ask or think (Eph. iii. 20).

Any service characterised by this spirit is true service. May the Lord help you and me to *live Christ*, in closest communion with Himself.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 46.

“MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE.”

March, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—Your letter has reached me, and, as usual, gives me true pleasure. I am

concerned, however, to hear that you have been poorly with a severe cold; but rejoice to know that, if it be for your good, you are already getting above it, while the temporary depression has been only a benefit to you.

“For he who to Thee doth consecrate his days,  
Trouble shall meet him but to bless.”

I am greatly delighted by your reference to, and use of, that magnificent word in 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. In giving it to us—for it is yours and mine, quite AS MUCH as *it was Paul's* (Rom. xv. 4; 2 Cor. i. 20)—the Lord has given us infinitely more than if He had bestowed on us the whole world and not this.

Oh, how instructive the whole context is! How very urgently do we need to be kept lowly, for self-conceit would be our utter destruction; and we are just as much given to it as to breathe. If even Paul, because of a visit to heaven, was in such imminent danger of being ruined through it, how necessary to us, with our very feeble measures of grace, to be kept very low. And we see that God can, and does, use the devil for the blessing of His children.

Paul, sorely tried now, carried his grief where every saint carries it—to the mercy seat; but the

Lord, unwilling to have His servant waste his time on fruitless praying, gives him at once a very, very different answer from the one he had expected or desired. But the answer given was infinitely better than that wished for; and, so clearly did Paul see this, that, so far from *now* desiring the removal of his trial, he rather *glories* in it, and *takes pleasure* in it. And our Lord's grace is *just as* sufficient always and everywhere for *you* and for *me*; only in our case, too, it can be fully manifested only in the weakness—the utter emptiness of the creature. We would fain bring our wisdom, and our might, and our worthiness to Jesus, that He may use them in His service, but it is our foolishness, our weakness, and our baseness that He wants. With the others He will have nothing to do whatever (see 1 Cor. i. 26-28). But even when we enjoy the power of Christ to strengthen us for our work, we are never conscious of possessing this power. We are conscious only of our own unutterable weakness, while the “power of Christ” only “rests upon us” (2 Cor. xii. 9). We do not feel it to be our own, but wholly His; not *in* us, but *above* us, and yet so near us, that the short arm even of our faith can easily reach it, and appropriate it, and make efficient use of it. O my brother, these thoughts

of God (Ps. xl. 5 ; Ps. cxxxix. 17) are to me sweeter than honey, and more enriching than gold.

You and I, called to a life as holy and devoted as Paul's, need the helps towards it, and the same helps are provided.

But we need not only to be made strong to serve, we need quite as much to be made conscious of our inconceivable weakness. Without this deep conviction, we would certainly be puffed up by God's very gift of strength, and would destroy ourselves. But God takes care of this and arranges for our being kept very low. Only when we feel weak can we be really strong (verse 10) ; nay, we are made to feel ourselves to be "NOTHING" (verse 11).

No efforts of ours can give us true strength ; and mere doctrines are worthless ; sham faith fills the head with notions ; but true faith alone can gird the soul with strength. And, oh, what strength is his, who is made "mighty through God" (2 Cor. x. 4). What a humbling, yet inspiring thought is it, that, for the doing of God's work, you and I have the *same* power working in us that wrought so *mightily* (Col. i. 29) in Paul ; nay, the same power that worked in Christ—the very power that is actually sustaining the universe, in all its countless worlds. Our lack of ability, then, for ANY appointed

service is never an excuse for us; *it is OUR SIN.*

True faith and genuine consecration never fail to secure all the power that can possibly be needed for any work God calls us to (Matt. xvii. 20).

In view of all this, it seems to me that our responsibilities are INFINITE. The sight of them is overwhelming. We are commanded to do actual IMPOSSIBILITIES (that is, impossibilities to the mere creature), and God will hold us *answerable* for the doing of them. Our duty, then, is pitched so very high that nothing less than strength on a scale like this would suffice; and he who sets himself in earnest to walk *worthy of the Lord* (Col. i. 10), “even as He walked” (1 John ii. 6), “worthy of God” (1 Thess. ii. 12), “perfect as He is perfect” (Matt. v. 48), an ornament to the Gospel (Tit. ii. 10), and a pattern of holy living (Tit. ii. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 12)—will find that he has need of ALL this help. Indeed, we are not *faithful* if we do not tax, as it were, *even this Divine strength*, given to us, to the uttermost.

O my brother, instead of this, how shamefully have we reduced the accepted standard of Christian living to so low a level, that even unassisted human nature CAN attain to it, and that with ease. May

my God forgive my grievous sins in this matter, and make His grace sufficient for my hourly need of it—perfecting His strength in my deplorable weakness.—Ever affectionately yours, J. D.



### Letter No. 47.

“MARAH-WATERS TURNED INTO SWEETNESS.”

May, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—I have never felt able to reply to your valued letter since I got it, and now I will delay no longer, but pencil a few words of mere apology.

I have been very, very frail of late. Not really much worse, I think; but always so very near the line of lowest water-mark, that a very small depression sinks me below it. It is all right and well.

What with heavy sickness every day, and all the day, with the utmost prostration of all strength; what with long nights of sleeplessness and pain; what with a state of brain that keeps me in unbroken solitude, and prevents me (since last midsummer) from mitigating that entire loneliness by reading (to any but a very small extent), or by

much thinking; what with these and other things, —life is becoming to me more a mere bundle of bodily miseries.

But the Lord ABUNDANTLY fulfils to me His Word of 2 Cor. xii. 9. He not only mitigates in measure the bitterness of my Marah-waters by casting His healing branch into it, but He turns the whole into sweetness. I constantly wonder at His goodness and grace, and cry out as in Ps. ciii. 1, 2.

Have just been musing on Rom. v. 20. How wonderful; how glorious! With much love.—Very heartily yours,

J. DICKIE.

*P.S.*—Have been favoured with some of the most blessed night visits from the King within the last two weeks I have ever known. O to love and trust Him more!

### MY HIDING PLACE.

“I flee unto Thee to hide me.”—PSALM cxliii. 9.

“THOU art, O Lord! my hiding place  
 In danger and distress;  
 My weary spirit turns to Thee,  
 When thronging terrors press.  
 When sense of sin doth sorely grieve,  
 When guilt afresh confounds,  
 Where can the soul self-loathing flee,  
 But to Thy bleeding wounds?”

“ And oh ! with bounding heart I praise  
Thy free exhaustless grace !  
Thou never to my needy cry  
Turn’st an upbraiding face :  
Thy ready hand applies the blood  
That sprinkles conscience clean ;  
Thy gentle voice the pardon breathes  
That stills the storm within.

“ Thou art mine only hiding place,  
When cherished comforts die ;  
My thirsting spirit seeks the fount,  
When earth’s poor streams run dry.  
How oft thy kind chastising hand  
From hurtful comforts frees !  
For joys that steal the heart from Thee,  
But poison while they please.

“ When strong corruptions rage within,  
Determined to be free,  
Unfit to bind them I but haste  
To hide from self in Thee :  
Thy holy presence only keeps  
These rebels in control ;  
Whene’er I leave Thee, swift they rend  
My unprotected soul.

“ From every point, within, around,  
What hosts of troubles come !  
They serve to chase my vagrant heart  
To THEE its blessed home.  
In creatures, or in wretched self,  
I cannot find a rest ;  
Each seeming pillow’s filled with thorns  
That drive me to Thy breast.

“ My Lord ! my God ! in Thee alone  
My happy soul shall boast !  
When thou a tear-stained cheek dost kiss,  
In wondering joy I’m lost :



My griefs are many, but far more  
 Thy priceless comforts be ;  
 Their sweetness makes me love the pang  
 That needs recourse to Thee.

“ Good Shepherd ! Thy most helpless Lamb  
 Within Thy bosom hide ;  
 Set me a seal upon Thy heart,  
 And let me there abide.  
 The night is dark ; there’s danger near :  
 So, till these shadows flee,  
 In safety folded on Thy breast,  
 Still keep me hid in Thee :  
 FOR THOU ART, LORD, MY HIDING PLACE.”

J. D.



### Letter No. 48.

“ BEING EDUCATED FOR SERVING GOD THROUGHOUT  
 ETERNITY.”

May, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—It is very, very kind indeed of you to write me so often; only I beg that you will not burden yourself to do so, I would not like that ; though at the same time, I want you to understand (what is the fact) that your letters are a great comfort to me, and a great help.

I feel, on the whole, a little livelier than when I last wrote ; though at bottom there is, I suppose, little difference. On the 24th of this month, it will be four years since I was shut up in solitude.

Oh, my brother, what have I tasted of the Divine goodness (Ps. xxxiv. 8) during these MOST BLESSED years ! You say, " I am sure you must often feel very wearied, and longing for the time when, etc., etc.," that is, of removal by death. No, dear brother. Such a thought never visits me at all. Of course, in such a case as mine, life has no enjoyment whatever in itself, and it would be impossible for me to desire its continuance for its own sake ; but oh, I have enjoyed the Divine communion, with which my poor and otherwise utterly wretched life is enriched. In fact these four years have been, and still are, the very happiest portion, *incomparably*, of my whole life. If there be any part of my life that I would be willing to live over again, it would be these four years ; and of them, some of my nights of deepest suffering. O my brother, my cup, filled with richest Divine mercy, RUNNETH OVER (Ps. xxiii. 5), and I am not the least tempted to wish that my cup were exchanged for that of any other fellow pilgrim whatever. I feel as the old dying disciple did, to whom some brother said, " Patience a little, John, you will soon be happy." " No, no," replied the dying man ; " I am quite happy now."

At first, I was troubled about the perfect use-

lessness of my position—shut out from all service ; but He has taken away this burden, which was somewhat heavy. I see now that He has only changed my post of serving — calling me to a service of patient endurance, instead of one of active energy ; and He may be quite as readily glorified by the one as by the other. And I find it just a little easier to acquiesce in this, when I remember that so many of our most active and zealous workers, in all corners of the field, are working in self-will, and self-wisdom, and in some cases (I fear) doing mischief—mischief from which I am mercifully preserved.

And then, I often think that, all service here is IN ITSELF a very small matter indeed ; that its main use is merely as an indispensable part of our education for serving God throughout eternity. The little girl's sewing is of very small value, *as work done*—indeed her mother may afterwards cast it into the rag-bag as useless—but still it is of immense value *as a preparation* for her future duties in life, and very much so is it with the service here of every child of God. Now I feel assured that God our Father is training me for my eternal future, as you for yours, and He is doing so in a love that is unutterable, in a wisdom

that never mistakes. What His design may be with me I do not even attempt to guess—I am utterly ignorant of it ; only he has a plan in regard to me, and is working it out steadily ; and I leave the whole to Himself.

I was struck with a thought two days ago when musing on the Lord's Prayer—"Thy will be done, AS in heaven, SO in earth" (Luke xi. 2). How is God's will done in heaven ? It is welcomed with the most joyous delight, and obeyed with the heartiest alacrity. And no wonder ; for that *will* never appoints anything but the utmost possible happiness to all the dwellers in heaven. But it is very different with us here on earth. The will of God always aims at our highest, truest BLESSEDNESS, but not our present happiness—often otherwise. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth—and not infrequently with scorpions like Rehoboam's. He leaves some heavenly-minded Lazarus starving on the pavement among the dogs, and casts his most devoted lovers into a dungeon with bleeding backs and feet fixed in the stocks. We do not sometimes even see that His will to us is PURE and PERFECT love. And yet we are not only to welcome the blessed will of God when it deeply humbles us, and sorely afflicts us—wings our very

hearts—but to welcome it AS heartily, AS unre-servedly, AS joyously, AS the glorified spirits in heaven do. Nay we are to desire it among the foremost objects of desire—to pray for it, and, when it comes, whatever it may bring, we are to rejoice in it, as an answer to our earnest praying, with true delight. Yes, we are to count it ALL JOY when we are afflicted (Jas. i. 2-12). That is, I, a poor worm of the dust, am to exercise the same grace, and the same measures of that grace, in my sorely-tried circumstances on earth, which the glorious Gabriel, without any trial, exercises before the Throne. For Jesus—the dying, self-devoted Jesus—is to be THE LAW of our constant life (Phil. ii. 5-8), and it shall in truth be so with me, just in so far as my actual living from hour to hour, is not MY living so much, as it is CHRIST LIVING IN ME (Gal. ii. 20).

O my brother, I feel that this same lesson of entire abnegation of all self-will is the grandest lesson, but the hardest—the VERY HARDEST—which God is teaching us here. But I feel that He is effectually teaching it to me by degrees. I praise Him for it with *my whole heart* (Ps. xciv. 12). My earnest desire is that henceforward there may be only ONE will—in everything—between

Him and me, and that this will be HIS. Most hearty love.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 49.

“ENJOYING GOD, AND COMMUNION WITH HIM.”

June, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—Your letter was very welcome to me, and your selected scriptures, with your remarks on passages, are always suitable, and instructive, and consolatory. And to the sufferer, a brother's sympathy (which you give me freely) is the sweetest gift he can bestow. Compared with this, and a brother's prayers, all other gifts were of small, small value.

Thank you for referring to Ps. lxii. It is a memorable psalm to me. More than one of its priceless lessons is woven into the texture of my life, and most suggestive is the verse you quote—“ONLY my soul waiteth upon God.” So many thoughts crowd upon me that I really can scarcely begin to express them.

The marginal reading is, certainly the more literal rendering ; but, I fancy that the text represents better the thought of the Psalmist. In read-

ing the fervent poetry of the Hebrew Prophets we cannot avoid misunderstanding their meaning often and often, unless we have made ourselves pretty familiar with their methods of speech ; and this it is a great pity that so few Christians think of doing. The *silence* here spoken of does not NECESSARILY (I think) exclude all speaking to God in the heart, any more than God's silence in Zeph. iii. 17 necessarily denies the fact of His singing in the joy of His satisfied love. It is rather the absence of *action*—than of *utterance* that is meant ; just as the ceasing of the sea from storm is called “silence” (Jonah i. 11, marg. comp. Mark iv. 39). Joshua's word, too, is similar. He bids the sun and the moon to be *silent*, that is, to cease, not from all *sound*, but from all motion (Josh. x. 12, marg.). I take the word of Psalm lxii. 1 to express the sweet, calm rest of a believing soul in God's presence, without Martha-like effort of any kind—bodily or mental—but only like Mary, listening in ravished gladness, and gazing on the revealed face (Rev. xxii. 4 ; Ps. xxvii. 4). Oh, my brother, for more of this blessed experience, when the soul, ceasing from all thoughts, even of service, ceasing from presenting formal prayers, gives itself up to *enjoyment*—enjoyment of God—and is content

only to adore and burn ! I often think of the first question in the Shorter Catechism, " Man's chief end is to glorify God, AND to ENJOY HIM for ever " —not to glorify Him only, but also to ENJOY ; and I fear that this last is as sadly overlooked as the first—for God is glorified by our enjoyment of Him.

Perhaps, without any worse effect than the exposure of my own great ignorance, I may make free to refer to a very small discovery I made, nearly three years ago, in connection with this "*silence*" before God, it has been of immense benefit to me ever since.

In my long sleepless nights of pain and severe trouble, with a state of brain which rendered all mental effort torture, I was greatly afflicted by the wandering of my thoughts ; but I had not strength to control them, and had to let them very much alone. I found the only thing I could do to reduce the evil to a minimum, was to take the helpless soul into God's presence, and cast it down at His feet—taking care only that it should not slip out of that presence ; while I looked for that presence of itself to control my thoughts, in a way that my distressed brain forbade me to do.

Well, by degrees, a new light dawned on me ;



but it was a good while before I made the full discovery. I found that, in my utter inability, through extremity of weakness, to speak to God, He would do all the speaking Himself, *if I would only stay beside Him* and listen. And He did it. In this way I came to have a degree—nay, a kind of communion with Him, such as I never enjoyed before; a communion which was incomparably more delightful, more humbling, more instructive, more sanctifying, than anything I had previously known.

One of my most “vehement desires” for many years had been for intimate communion with God, (and I am sure that I was favoured occasionally with a small measure of this, but nothing like what I now enjoyed). And now, when looking back upon the past, I found that I had, *all along*, committed an immense mistake. In seeking communion, I found I had been doing MOST OF THE SPEAKING—almost the whole of it, indeed; and I had been leaving God nothing (or little more than nothing), but *only* to *listen*. The fool had been indulging in idle, endless chattering, while the Infinitely Wise was expected only to listen *to me*. I was ashamed, confounded, humbled. It is not communion if the talk be all on one side; and,

least of all, when the only *Wise Party* never gets a word in. It was a wonderful discovery to me, and a blessed one. God has very much to say to us in private besides what is in the written Word, though nothing but what is in perfect harmony with the Holy Word of God, "which liveth and abideth for ever," *but we must give Him our ears to hear*. Oh ! how much we lose from our practice of idle, self-conceited *talking to God*, without listening to Him, when He condescends to speak to us by His Spirit in our hearts. I doubt not there are men in the world who think they carry on communion with God, and who may have spent much time in the closet ; but who seldom or never have listened to the secret whispers of God in their hearts, who are comparative strangers to true communion. — With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

---

### Letter No. 50.

"TOO LITTLE ALONE WITH GOD."

July, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—I have again your kind and welcome letter of the 6th. I am glad that you have once more got a little season to go apart

and rest awhile (Mark vi. 31), to bring the jarring instrument, if possible, into better tune ; and I heartily pray God to use the season, both for the strengthening of the body and the refreshment of the spirit. Ah, my brother, we are far too little *ALONE with GOD* ; and this, I am persuaded, is one of the very saddest features in our modern Christian living. It is *work*—*WORK*—*WORK*—at the very best some well meant Martha-like serving ; but where, where are the more devoted Marys, who find the shortest surest way to the heart of Jesus, by ceasing very much from self-willed, self-appointed toils, and, sitting humbly at His feet, to let Him carry on His blessed work within ourselves. If the Mary-like method were carried out more, it might abridge considerably the amount of work apparently accomplished ; but it would incomparably enhance the quality. What though we should lose a hundredweight, and get instead of it only a pound—if the hundredweight lost were only *lead*, and the pound gotten were pure *GOLD*?

I am much as usual ; needing very much Divine grace and mercy in every form, and both humbled and gladdened by my unfailing experience of it. Yes, indeed ! as the hymn asks—

“ Who should louder sing than I ? ”

It is just a year since I was suddenly struck down

with palsy. This, added to my other troubles, has had a great effect both on mind and body, still further enfeebling both. I am never out of bed, can read but little, very little ; see nobody, except some one in the house to do me some little service, and that only for a very few minutes, or seconds (oftener only seconds than minutes), and so my life is very monotonous ; but, of late, I have not been so loaded with continual sickness, as I had been for perhaps eight months preceding, and this leaves the mind a little freer for meditation. Oh, how good the Lord is to me ! Good equally in taking away, and in the very partial restoration. ALL His ways are in truth and in sure mercy. Had He not stripped me bare and cast me aside so long into utter solitude, I never would have so prized His gracious companionship—never would have been capable of so enjoying it. How can He wipe our eyes if we have shed no tears ? It is the mourner He comforts (Isa. lxi. 2) ; and so comforts that it is a blessed thing to *need* ; and, through one's need, be made capable of receiving His unspeakable consolations (Matt. v. 4). "Brother," says dear old Rutherford, in a letter to a friend, "I am one of Christ's dawtit\* ones, I am fed upon no deaf nuts ;

\* Scotch word, meaning "fondled, caressed."

He hath opened fountains for me in the wilderness."

But, I weary you with my pointless babble. My dull brain renders thinking painful, and clear thinking impossible; but I should not afflict you with it.

And, oh, my brother, what comfort, what strength, what store of everything desirable is to be found in the sufficient grace of Jesus! (2 Cor. xii. 9). It makes one bless the need that constrains us to seek Him, and to cleave to Him. The real cause of a Christian's sorrow is, in general, not his troubles, but his unbelief. If, instead of looking at and dwelling upon the details of his trouble, he were to feed heartily on the exceeding great and precious promises of God, covering all the necessities and griefs of every care, of every trouble, how soon would all sorrow flee away, and he would begin to sing his hallelujah song. For there is far more, infinitely more, in the promises to fill him with "joy unspeakable," than there can be in any trouble to cast him down (see James i. 2).

Farewell for the present, my beloved brother, with most hearty love.—Ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 51.

“UNBELIEF THE CAUSE OF ALL UNHAPPINESS.”

Irvine, August, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—I should be glad to think that you have been somewhat strengthened by your little retirement, and that you will go back to work (if He wills it) with recruited energies of body, and a spirit more set than ever to “*follow the Lord FULLY*,” as Caleb did, saying—

“His grace my strength, my guide His Word,  
My aim, the glory of the Lord.”

I keep much the same, save that the almost incessant sickness I once had continues to diminish by degrees. I feel thankful for partial relief, since it leaves the mind a little freer to think ; but I am not sensibly improved in other respects. This, however, is of no consequence whatever. Let the *Lord do with me ALL that He pleases*. He is good, always good, only good, equally good, when He sends sickness or aught else, as when He removes it.

A Christian's unhappiness—every particle of it—comes, not out of his afflicting circumstances, but out of his unbelieving heart. If he had no end but God's will, and no joy but the full, free,

infinite love of God to him in Christ Jesus, and were resting in the sweet repose of assured faith on this unchanging love, his troubles would not only be moderated, they would be *impossible*. But, when one lets the mind dwell on the circumstances of affliction, instead of looking at the love and wisdom of Him who has appointed it, and forgetting the most gracious assurances which He gives us, as to His design in so afflicting, then it is well that we be scourged back by very misery to the lowly place of self-emptying, and fully resigned, and joyously confiding faith.

But I must not occupy your time. Indeed, I would scarcely have written you at all just now, had it not been for the opportunity which this note furnishes me of sending, through you, my heartiest love to the beloved ones at S——. Will you kindly convey to them, please, my little message?

With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

"Saved . . . that we . . . might serve Him."—LUKE i. 71-74.

"Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God."—1 COR. vi. 20.



**Letter No. 52.**

“IT IS ALL LOVE, EQUALLY, WHETHER HE GIVES  
OR TAKES AWAY.”

September, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—I have been so weighed down of late with an almost constant sickness—which made it so difficult to write—that I fear I have allowed myself to be too lazy. To-day it is somewhat lightened, and I heartily thank our gracious Father both for sending it, and for the partial withdrawing of it. It is all LOVE from Him who is Love, and who never shows it more than when He calls us aside, and puts His loving gracious hand upon us. Dear Samuel Rutherford said, “Welcome, welcome Jesus, what way soever He come, if we only get a sight of Him. And I am sure it is better to be sick, provided Christ come to my bedside and draw aside the curtains and say, ‘Courage! I am thy Salvation!’ than to enjoy health without Him.” Oh, my brother, it is blessedly true, as you and I know, and so again I would, from my inmost soul, say, It is all love, equally whether He gives or takes away.

Take away! No; strictly speaking, the Lord never takes from His children. He is only exchanging His gifts, withdrawing some worthless or



abused mercy, which was hindering our reception of infinitely greater mercies. He is never so truly liberal as when, to the fleshly eye, He seems to strip us bare. It is but to make ample room, in a misoccupied heart, for His most munificent givings.

I fondly hope that you keep well, and, above all, that the "candle of the Lord" shines brightly on your head.

My heart is full, my cup runneth over. It cannot be moved without spilling.

With most hearty love in Christ, ever yours affectionately,

J. D.



### Letter No. 53.

"SAD FALL OF A ZEALOUS PROFESSOR."

October, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—I was very glad to receive yours, and am most thankful to see that you are so well. The Lord continue it, and make use of it. I feel feeble, and brain distressingly irritable.

I heard, not long ago, of the recent death, in a distant land, of an old friend. It brought past days very vividly before me. Perhaps the Lord

made him a greater spiritual help to me than any man I ever knew. We fell acquainted, say forty years ago. He was twenty years my senior, and was my superior in every way. He had no business, so had time to carry out his likings. He was the grandson of a British Peer, and had a small fortune. His great study was the Bible. I never met any one so familiar with it, and he was VERY ZEALOUS in street preaching and such-like.

We met often. Our converse was wholly on Scripture, and was generally closed with prayer. This for years. At last he began to drop insinuations about inspiration. I took him up one day, when he said he had been carefully examining, and was satisfied the Bible was half delusion, half swindle. I was shocked, and referred to the Lord Jesus. "Oh, Him!" said he; "I take Him for an impostor." I burst into weeping, and told him that no man should be my friend who so spoke of the Blessed One, and that we must part. We parted. I never saw him since. He left the country soon after, and, so far as I know, lived and died an infidel.

Alas! alas! it stirs my deepest grief to recall it. This was the close of twenty or twenty-five years of a zealous profession.

“ But,” you ask, “ how was this man made a blessing to you ? ” In this way. We agreed upon nothing almost, his spirit and mine were so diverse ; and the sight of his fall warned me off from his path. *First*, I saw the immensity of the danger of self-deception. Very, very early in life the Lord applied to me, and pressed home Jér. xvii. 9, and such-like. I felt in my own heart that it was as hard to keep from self-deception as from breathing, and was assured that every natural man was its constant victim. The stone is not more prone to fall to earth, than man is to religious self-deception ; and my poor friend’s fall made me tremble for myself.

*Second*, He had little or no consciousness of sin. I never knew any one so free of it. Many rebukes he gave me for my slavish spirit, especially for my expressions in prayer. He seemed never to feel that there was anything in him needing confession and deep repentance. He mistook his insensibility to pain for exemption from the disease. Love is proverbially blind to faults, and no love is more so than self-love. He did not know that the man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells is more dissatisfied about his best duties, than the careless man is about his worst sins.

*Third*, He had a firmer assurance of his good condition than any I ever knew. He often censured me for my lack of this. "For me," he said, "I feel as sure of heaven as if I were in it." Alas! alas! and yet I fear that the poor man never was a Christian at all! While I believe with my whole heart in the eternal security of the truly converted man, I as firmly believe that the most confident have often the least reason for their confidence. I have been struck with a great variety of cases in our Lord's own teaching—take a very solemn one—Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23.

*Fourth*, I could now see that he had put on Christ (as he thought), without having first put off HIMSELF. This *cannot*, CANNOT be. We must *put off* the old man ere we can put on the new; see Col. iii. 9, 10. Faith is the putting on of Christ (Rom. xiii. 14); Christ is the "best robe" (Luke xv. 22), but the prodigal's filth must be washed away, and his vile raiment stripped off, ere the best robe be put on. And viler rags has no prodigal than these—SELF-will, SELF-pleasing, SELF-confidence, SELF-righteousness. It is a strait gate; and no man can pass it who is not prepared to be stripped of that which formerly belonged to himself. I did not see it all then, as I do now; but,

even then, I saw that with my poor friend SELF was as much as ever, only it was religious self.

Now, the benefit to me of this trying illustration was immense. In K——, where I saw so much of the working of the SAME spirit, I was kept from being carried away by it, and, as another special benefit, I was led, shortly after his fall, to make it my special prayer for myself in private, that the Lord would completely BREAK my heart (Ps. li. 17), and completely HEAL it; and enable me to give up to Him this broken, healed heart *without reserve*. I kept up this prayer, and I believe the last four years are a gracious answer to it.

I have been too tedious. Forgive me.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

#### ONLY THE SINNER FINDS THE SAVIOUR.

“I am not come to call *the righteous*, but *sinner*s.”—MATT. ix. 13

“LIFE was once to me like summer,  
With its glitter and its smile;  
I, as thoughtless as the insect,  
Trifled through the little while.  
All was buoyant life within me,  
All was jubilant around;  
Need of Jesus then I felt not,  
So I sought Him not, nor found.

“ But the summer soon was ended,  
And the gloomy winter came ;  
All my blooming joys were withered  
Into griefs of every name.  
Still, I hoped the change of season  
Would bring summer round again ;  
But, instead, the gloom grew blacker—  
And I sought my Saviour then.

“ Yes, I sought with cries and weeping,  
But no answer was returned ;  
Echo flung me back my 'plainings,  
'Twas as if my cry was spurned.  
Sore distressed at the silence,  
I with fervour did entreat :  
Still the ear could catch no answer,  
Save the heart's distracted beat.

“ Well I knew 'twas but through JESUS  
That the sinner comes to God ;  
But with *what* we come to Jesus ?  
Ah ! 'twas here I missed the road :  
I was bringing Him *obedience*,  
When I should have brought but *sin*,  
So my knocking, though half-frantic,  
No admittance thus could win.

“ Then I studied to know better  
What already well I knew ;  
And the good things that I practised,  
Better still I strove to do :  
Yet the deeper grew the darkness,  
And the silence grew more dread  
So I owned my case was hopeless,  
And my soul among the dead.

“ Then I cast me, self-despairing,  
On the Saviour's boundless grace ;  
Not a hope had I of blessing,  
If HE met not such a case.

And I felt that need so urgent  
 Scarce on earth could ever be :  
 So I begged for one so ruined  
 Mercy instant, mercy free.

“ Then at once the peace of pardon  
 Did my sinking soul restore,  
 And the love sprung up spontaneous,  
 Which I could not force before.  
 When I took the place of *sinner*,  
 And at mercy's footstool lay,  
 Jesus took HIS place as SAVIOUR,  
 And at once put sin away.

“ Ah ! 'tis ruinous to cover  
 Filthy sores with rags more foul :  
 Let us strip them bare before Him,  
 That His grace may make us whole.  
 He delights in showing mercy  
 To a soul that *owns* its sin ;  
 But the soul that thinks of *earning*,  
 Not a smile shall ever win.”

J. D.



### Letter No. 54.

“ TAKE HEED THAT THE LIGHT WHICH IS IN THEE  
 BE NOT DARKNESS.”

29th October, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—I am in receipt this morning of your kind letter, and I lose no time in beginning a brief reply. For aught I see in your letter, you seem to be in good health, and I am thankful for it. The Lord enable you and me to

lay ourselves, with all that we have and are, on His altar, as BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.

You quote the saying of a friend, "That no amount of experience or knowledge, etc., will secure us, that we may not fall." True, most true; but the lesson taught me by the sad case I referred to in my last letter goes far, far deeper than this. In the case of my friend, it was not mere backsliding. I fear the unhappy man was never in Christ at all, and the startling warning pressed on me was this, that the *devil's* imitations of grace are so wonderful, that a man may seem to be a brightly shining saint, while all the time, at his best, as at his worst, he was but an utterly self-deceived soul. His case showed me what a man is capable of, and it pressed on me with an emphasis, which scarcely anything else could do, the awful words of the Lord, "Take heed that the LIGHT which is in thee be not darkness." A man may have true Bible-light, but, query, did he get it from God or from Satan; is he using it as one who is both taught and led of the HOLY SPIRIT, or as one of Satan's "deceitful workers"? One of the earliest Scriptures pressed on my heart was Jer. xvii. 9, which, along with a number of kindred Scriptures, seem to be forgotten, or, rather utterly unknown in our day.



And, while this sad case, with the Scriptures impressed on me through it, made me tremblingly jealous of myself (for which, alas, I have had constant good reason), it also warned me against trusting unduly to the extraordinary apparent sanctity of others, so far, at least, as to follow them, unless I had Scriptural warrant for so doing.

Oh, my brother, we need Divine grace ; and how full, how free, how perfectly sufficient that infinite grace is, to meet all our need. But to get it we must ask it, and trust for it ; which we shall scarcely do, if we know not something of the “desperate wickedness” of our own hearts, or the unfathomable “depths of Satan.”

Often, often, do I ask myself how far does this professed faith of mine make me really ONE with JESUS? Feasting with delight on His words, do I by means of them enter into such communion with Him, that it can be truly said, I eat His very FLESH and drink His very BLOOD? (see John vi. 53) ; am I, with trembling heedfulness (Phil. ii. 12) walking in His footsteps? (1 Peter ii. 21 ; 1 John ii. 6). Do I actually live only for the same end for which He lived, and died, and rose again? and do I look up to God above me, and on sinful man around me, and on an evil world only through His

eyes; seeing and feeling as He saw and felt? Have I, as He was in the wilderness, been sorely tempted to self-living, and have I overcome the Tempter, once and again, in the spirit of Jesus? Have I, along with Him, wrestled in very agony in the garden, and, like Him, got perfect rest in the heartfelt cry, "FATHER, not my will—not MY WILL, but THINE be done?" Have I hung beside Him on His Cross (Gal. ii. 20); and have I, through my dying eyes (Col. iii. 3), seen the old world of my first love fade away from my vision, like a dream when one awakes, never to return? Have I been buried in His grave, and have I risen with Him in His resurrection, and am I now living in Him, and with Him, in the newness of a heavenly life; is the old self-life, together with the entire world of things on which that self-life lived, gone for ever?

Ah, my brother, it is faith of this kind which constitutes true saving faith. As for the faith which is so readily professed, and so glibly talked about, it is valueless. I have always asked these questions rigorously of myself, and, with GOD'S help, I hope to do so to the end, for I feel daily within, what demands the most watchful self-denial and self-jealousy. It is of little consequence what

I may think of myself; still less is it what others may think or judge me to be; but the great question is, What does GOD think of me; what does He see me to be? and in many—very many cases, indeed—I believe His verdict is likely to differ from ours.

Well may I wonder at *God's* astonishing patience with sinners, and at His long-suffering patience with His own children, especially with ME, which is most marvellous of all! It is forgotten too much that *even the righteous scarcely are saved* (see 1 Peter iv. 18). As a matter of fact, the great Deceiver is deceiving the whole world; and such are his wiles, that if it were possible (mark these precious words, *if it were possible*), they are fit to deceive even the very elect! (Rev. xii. 9; Matt. xxiv. 24).

But I fear you are weary; will you bear with me? It is because I so believe, I have so spoken.—I remain, with most hearty love, ever affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



## Letter No. 55.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Irvine, December, 1887.

My ever dear Brother,—Your last kind note gives me warrant to think that your cold is considerably better ; and for this I am heartily thankful. And so we have seen the last of our beloved friend, M—— S——, in this world ; but there is another world, where the broken links of life here shall be gathered up and re-united more firmly than ever. I feel as Toplady, “I would not give sixpence for that friendship which death is able to terminate.” It has shaken me, and put me about much more than I had expected. These tender ties are not ruptured without much pain, and it is permitted us to feel it. “JESUS WEPT.”

The Bible, priceless gift of God as it is, becomes a blessing to us only when we truly accept, and use along with it, another incomparable gift, the gift of His own Divine Spirit. It is only by His help that we ever read the Bible rightly, or make a profitable use of it. And He not only interprets it to us, opening out its doctrines, but He also gives us a holy heart, makes us, in fact, partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4). In exact proportion

to the measure we are guided and taught by Him does the Bible become to us a blaze of light, flooding everything within us, above us, around us, with its radiance. "Our eye being single, the whole body becomes full of light." But without this supernatural illumination the entire region of the spiritual is veiled with impenetrable darkness; nay, the Scriptural and religious light which we seem to have, and in which, perhaps, we glory, works in us only as darkness (see Matt. vi. 23).

But in order to enjoy this blessed and incomparable teaching, there are certain indispensable preliminaries. We must first be in Christ, for it is only as living members of this Living Head that the Spirit of Life will enter into us, and dwell within us. In order, then, to have become members of Christ we must have accepted Him as our *all*, our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). We must have surrendered ourselves absolutely into His trusted hands, to be *crucified with Him*, and raised with Him, and to live henceforward as having His life, and not our own, living in us (Gal. ii. 20). And having through this union with Christ received His Spirit, we must faithfully follow His guidance, as every child of God really does (Rom. viii. 14).

The Spirit, if grieved (Eph. iv. 30), will not long enlighten us; but if we give up ourselves to His leading, He will lead us to walk as Jesus walked—that is, in uttermost self-denial and devotedness to the will of God (Phil. ii. 5-8). And if we would ascertain whether we are enjoying His infallible teaching in regard to our understanding of the Bible, let us see whether we be really led of Him in regard to other matters. Does He so enlighten us as to the path of duty, and so strengthen us to walk firmly in it, that we have no difficulty about discovering what it is, nor inability to discharge it? (Luke xi. 36). Has He lifted us up, and is He still further lifting us up, out of all love of the world and all selfishness, either of which is inconsistent with a Christian spirit? If we are not being actually led of the Spirit in these respects, it is quite certain, that though we may read the Bible, it is to little real profit. The very densest religious darkness possible to a human soul on earth, is that of the man admirably skilled in the letter of Holy Scripture, and in the doctrines of Divine revelation, but whose heart is not right with God. An earthly heart joined to a heavenly profession makes a man a spiritual monster.—With assurances of hearty love, ever affectionately yours, JOHN DICKIE.

## Letter No. 56.

GODLY CONFIDENCE AND SELF-DELUSION.

Irvine, January, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—I thank you very heartily for your kind letter. Your frequent writing is a true kindness, which I appreciate very highly. It is a refreshing sip of cold water, which shall not be forgotten in that day. I see that your health is not quite restored yet, and I have been unusually frail of late ; may our Lord secure through all this gracious discipline on you and me the loving end He aims at !

With my whole heart do I say “amen” to your solemn reflections on the rapidly approaching day of JUDGMENT. Alas, that we contrive to overlook it so completely, as most of us do ! The world never thinks of it at all ; and the professing Church is unfit to remind her of it, for she herself forgets it almost as completely. How different the spirit of the apostles, and of all the holy men in all ages, who walked with God. How awfully solemn shall that day be to all ; and then what tremendous issues shall it bring ! In view of it our Lord exhorts disciples to WATCH and PRAY ALWAYS (Luke xxi. 36), for none but the “WORTHY” shall stand the searching scrutiny.

I believe that our modern neglect of this most solemn truth, and of very much besides, comes out of an extensive tampering with the Gospel of God's grace, which has been long prevalent among us, till now many have got it perverted into another gospel altogether. As God gives it to us, His Gospel has in it something that is very sweet, but it has also in it something that is intolerably bitter to the sin-loving heart of the natural man. And, under the constraints of unmortified selfishness, some have for long been carefully taking out of the Gospel all the bitter, and intensifying all the sweet, till now the popular gospels of the hour have not retained as much of the genuine Gospel in them as will save a soul. This is my conviction, and it is one fitted to *break the heart*.

What would we think of a gospel out of which its human teachers had carefully taken the CROSS of our Lord Jesus, and made no reference to the blessings procured through that CROSS? Would such a mutilated gospel save anybody, or benefit any one; or would it merely delude the believer of it? Would it be a gospel at all? And yet in the personal appropriation of the great salvation, I find in the Word of God that I can no more be saved without my being crucified with Christ than I could



have been had Christ not been crucified for me. HIS cross was needed to procure salvation ; MINE to appropriate and enjoy it. If, then, through false teaching I permit myself to drop out of the Gospel, as I receive it, the truth connected with MY OWN crucifixion, I am setting God's Gospel completely aside. It then becomes no gospel at all ; and though it excites much joy, that joy is the inflation of delusion.

“ I know whom I have believed,” says the joyous apostle ; and, oh, thrice happy he who can TRUTHFULLY say the same ! But, in the apostle, as in all TRUE saints, this confidence is the result of the Holy Spirit's testimony (Rom. viii. 16). When Paul expressed this confidence, all his feelings and his actions were in harmony with it. He had totally and for ever parted with the world (Gal. i. 4 ; vi. 14), so totally that its wealth and its poverty were alike to him (Phil. iv. 11, 12). He had given up finally and unreservedly to Divine judgment that self-life in which all men, save the regenerate, live, and move, and have their being ; he now lived, “ not *he* but Christ in him (Gal. ii. 20). And this was carried out so that he could say, “ To me to live is Christ.” So hostile was he to the fleshly element still within him, that even after all this he

keeps his body under, lest he should become a cast-away (1 Cor. ix. 27); and so far from resting satisfied with all this, he, forgetting past attainments, pressed forward with all his might (Phil. iii. 12, 13).

I feel persuaded, dear brother, that the apostle's confidence was the outcome, not alone of his faith in Christ, but also of his holy walk. He followed the Spirit's leading; therefore he enjoyed the Spirit's consolations. These are not to be enjoyed by any man who is not walking after the same Spirit. But, alas, there are many professors of Christianity who are not so walking. As for the world, they have given up none of it. They have parted with nothing. They press towards no mark, and for no prize, except it be an earthly one. And as for self-denials, they know nothing of such things. And yet they shrink not from appropriating the triumphant words of the holy apostle, uttered just as he was about to finish his LIFE OF MARTYRDOM by a martyr-death, "I know that there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc. Oh, my brother, if there be such a frightful thing in this world as self-delusion, these are the unhappy ones who seem to me to be most hopelessly given up to it. But every unit of us all suffers more or less

from the unprecedented prevalence everywhere about us of delusions, so cunningly concocted by the father of lies, acting as an angel of light, that they are fit to deceive, if it were possible, even the *elect*.

In hastily closing, let me repeat the call of our blessed Master, to watch and pray ceaselessly for ourselves, and also to pray ceaselessly for all men (what a big field of service is committed to us); and then, besides praying for them, let us testify to them with martyr-like courage, as the Lord gives us light. This is one part of the work, given to us all, who would be faithful in these perilous times of the last days.

Forgive what you see to be wrong in this. These things press me sore, often, indeed, almost beyond endurance, so as to make me in a very, very small measure enter into the feelings of Paul when he uttered the marvellous words in Rom. ix. 1-3.—  
With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

JOHN DICKIE.

---

## Letter No. 57.

"HEREIN IS LOVE."

April, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—I am very happy to see from your kind letter that you are well, I was beginning to be a shade concerned; but now all is well. I am frail as before, but a great deal lightened in respect to heavy sickness; it used to be unintermitting, twenty hours out of every twenty-four. Now it leaves me intervals of, say four days out of five; and even on sick days, it is much lighter. Oh how good the Lord is, whether in sending it or abating it! "All His paths are *mercy and truth.*"

You refer to the Lord's kindness to me in so graciously sustaining me. I am confounded at His way of unutterable loving-kindness with one like me, "My cup runneth over." I have several sources of trial, some I may not speak of; but He sends them ALL in pure LOVE, and He blesses them to me. My bodily afflictions cost me scarcely the approach to a sorrow; my heaviest sorrows come from the discoveries the Lord often makes to me of my own evil heart. These are sometimes too heavy for me to bear.

It is not because of any immorality, but oh, the unspiritualities ! “ Behold I am vile ! ” “ I abhor myself ; ” neither is it so much for this or for that wrong act ; but it is for the possession of a nature which is itself all wrong ; that, being a corrupt tree, can produce only corrupt fruit. I myself am SIN, all sin. Alas, the prayerless praying, and the lifeless confessions, and the unbelief, and the cold love, and the presence of all that should not be, and the absence of all that should.

Yet all this He makes the occasion for the tender displays of His infinite love to me. One begins to comprehend the manner of His love, when in the depths of one’s humbling discoveries of SELF, He should only clasp me closer than ever before to His heart, and should actually lay His pure lips to mine so polluted, and kiss me “ with the kisses of His mouth ; ” it is indescribable, incomprehensible, and incredible, were it not that there is the fact ; He actually does it. How wonderful it is to have one’s eyes divinely anointed to see Jesus, as the Holy Spirit alone can make us see Him, dying for us in pure love ; and to look to the Son of God now on the throne, still acting for us in PURE LOVE ; but most wonderful of all, to see and to feel this crucified, enthroned Son of God coming

into a heart like mine, and choosing, yes CHOOSING, it, for His special dwelling; and all this out of love, a love such that it gives to Him an infinitely greater joy to do it, than to me to have it done, "HEREIN IS LOVE"!!

I do not find, dear brother, after my small experience of it, that a frail and suffering body interferes in the slightest way with a man's true enjoyment of God, or his real service to His name. It is well for the healthy to remember this; it is sometimes forgotten. If God has given to any one a moderately healthy body, let the happy one be grateful for, and rejoice in this good gift of God, but let his joy be, not that he has a strong body wherewith to better enjoy life, but that he can lay a strong body on the altar of God in unreserved consecration and holy LOVE, to be worn out in active labours in the Master's vineyard. But if God has given, instead, a very weak and sorely suffering body, let the receiver be none the less grateful for God's good gift to him, and none the less joyous in the exercise of his special calling. But let his gratitude for his weakness, and his joy in the possession of it, rest only on this, that he has a suffering body to lay on the altar, to serve God in the way in which God has appointed him to

serve. For the Master who hath appointed the service to each, hath given to each the body that befits it. And if self-will, self-seeking, and all self-ends be cast out, the one service will be as acceptable, as useful, and as JOYOUS as the other. We may not dare to choose our service; God has wisely chosen for us both; and I am more than satisfied with His choice for me; as you, with His choice for you. Oh, it is sweet, as you know, to labour faithfully for Christ, and to see His work prosper; but if He calls to it, it is sweeter still, I think, to lie helpless, lonely, and afflicted in his hand; I have had a small taste of both, and this is my thought. There is a deep, deep depth of perfect rest to be enjoyed in this last condition, which is more rarely reached in the former. The great disturber of peace and holiness is SELF-WILL. In active labours, self-will insinuates its pernicious influence with astonishing craftiness. Now, I think that when the service lies in patient suffering, there is not quite so great temptation to, nor such wide scope for, this *self-will*. The faith of the gracious sufferer, can, I think, more readily than the faith of the gracious labourer, find a place of unbroken rest before God, when it is enabled to dismiss all self-will, and to sink with blessed sweet-

ness into the full repose of perfect acquiescence in the lovely will of GOD.

May God as richly make you a blessing, my beloved brother, as He has blessed you.—With hearty love, I am, yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 58.

“GOD’S WORD MANIFESTS HIMSELF.”

May, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—Your kind letter, just received, is as usual a great pleasure to me; how great a pleasure, no one situated as you are can even faintly judge. I have no Christian intercourse whatever, indeed I have scarcely any intercourse at all except through a letter; and my correspondents are only two, or at most three. This last week, I was moved almost to tears of gladness at sight of the first house-fly; they have been such company to me in past lonely summers, the very ministers of my God to me for good. You will understand, then, how dearly I prize a letter from you.

It is now over five years since the Lord was pleased to shut me up in this Patmos, in which He



has vouchsafed me a thousand times over, such visions of His glory, and such love-feasts of His grace, as have made these years of suffering the happiest fragment of my life. He has shut me out from my beloved fellows, but then He has come beside me Himself. My cup of mercy has all along been fuller than that of many, but now it runneth over ; and of all my mercies, I reckon the chiefest mercy of all, the discipline of these five blessed years, not counting, of course, His crowning mercies, the gift of His dear Son and the Holy Spirit.

At your request, brother, I venture a very few unworthy thoughts on Psalm xix. 9. CREATION exhibits God's glory, but God's WORD manifests Himself (verse 7). How precious this word was to David we see in verse 10 ; and we are the more impressed with these words of the Psalmist when we remember that, in his day, the Bible contained no more than the first seven books of the Old Testament, with Job. We, my brother, have got the whole inspired book of God, and we have the marvellous life and still more marvellous death of the blessed Son of God, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 7 to 9, the Psalmist refers to this

*Word of God* under several names, and he ascribes to it several effects, which we shall not enter into. The verse, you particularise, speaks of the word as "judgments which are TRUE, and altogether RIGHTEOUS." For my own soul, I would use the Divine WORD in order to learn what God Himself is; and when it tells me that this WORD is true and righteous, I would pass through the WORD to reach God Himself, and rest in the assurance that HE is true and righteous altogether.

And there is urgent need for this being done by every one of us. Possibly there is not a single Christian among us who does not suffer more or less from the extent to which the forgetfulness of God's holiness is carried, while so many professors are lying dead in their sins, through their entire ignorance of the character of God.

There are, I think, three grand truths with which, from the very first, saving faith has mainly to do; not as mere doctrines, but as effectually taught by the Holy Spirit.

The sinner will never pass from death into life without a spiritual apprehension of these truths; and the believer will not grow in grace unless he cling to, and tighten his firm grip on these truths. These are—1st, God's infinite holiness; 2nd, My

own ALMOST infinite sin ; 3rd, The infinite love and mercy of this holy God to such guilty and desperately wicked (Jer. xvii. 9) sinners in Christ Jesus. We cannot overlook any one of these three ; and most blessed is he on whose heart the Holy Spirit has graven them all in DEEPEST lines.

The holiness of God is such that we cannot endure the very smallest sight of it, excepting in the face of Jesus, dying for us in love. The sinner, not looking at it here, and not looking at it in FAITH, starts back in dread so soon as the subject is suggested to him, for the vision would be too frightful ; the slight glance he had, wakens distress, and stirs up conscious hatred to this most Holy One, and so he endeavours to hide himself in some one of Satan's many refuges of lies ; and trusts (as he vainly hopes), to *Divine love*.

As for a humbling consciousness of personal sin, and a loathing estimate of the enormity of all sin, as sin, these constitute the deep foundations on which the entire structure of a Christian character is built, see Matt. v. 3. It is with the laying of this foundation that the Holy Spirit begins His work in the soul (John xvi. 8).

I know nothing so desirable as a deep, DEEP conviction of sin ; and this as an indispensable pre-

paration for further communications of grace. Now, this indispensable conviction of sin we cannot have, any further than as we realise the infinite holiness and righteousness of God.

Oh, my brother, let us seek to have it burned in on our souls, and let us keep it before our eyes day and night, that God's standard of Christian living is very different from that which is generally accepted by ourselves. Oh ! it is a lofty standard, a VERY LOFTY ONE ; and the holy and righteous One lowers it for nobody. He shall, most certainly, judge by its lofty claims at last ; and it is because we judge ourselves by our own low standard, that so few of us are truly condemned, but are leaving our judgment to Him, when He comes to judge the world (see 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32).

As long as we confine attention to what WE ARE, and DO, we shall never know ourselves in any way that shall be profitable to us. Our true self-knowledge must be sought by us, rather in the clear discernment of WHAT WE ARE NOT, *yet* OUGHT TO BE. It is not the sight of this, that, or the other evil done by us, which breaks our hearts and fills us to the brim with self-loathing. It is the sight of the unclimbed heights of holiness ; so high, indeed, that most of us are content to live without

ever having seen these delectable mountains, even in the distance. Oh, my brother, we are to be to God, each of us in his place, ALL that Jesus was, and is ; and that we may be enabled to live on this lofty pitch, the very spirit of Jesus has come to live within us. Just as a man yields himself up to be led of this spirit, in faith and love, shall he climb these holy heights ; and if he is not honestly trying to do so, and also deeply humbled because of his lamentable failure, I see little reason for his assuming that he has the spirit of Christ. And then, with the heart thus UTTERLY BROKEN, in view of the infinite holiness of God, and the loftiness of his claims, and in view, also, of our unutterable sinfulness, what blessedness can approach the bliss of such a soul, when Jesus clasps the heart-broken penitent to His bosom, and lavishes on him all the unrestrained exuberance of His dying and living LOVE !

May you and I, my brother, experience more and more of this blessedness every day. I would have been glad to have added a word or two more on Divine love, but I sent you a long letter on that subject not long ago. I am ashamed of my poor words on this great theme ; may the Lord give you enriching meditation on it.—With hearty love, ever affectionately yours,

JOHN DICKIE.

## MERCY IS FREE.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord : for with the Lord there is mercy,  
and with Him is plenteous redemption."—PSALM cxxx. 7.

"IN silence of night  
On past life I lay musing ;  
And wept that 'twas all  
God's great mercy abusing ;  
And I scarcely could think there was pardon for me ;  
But a voice in my heart whispered, 'MERCY IS FREE.'

"I thought of my sins  
That no angel could number  
Their greatness and blackness  
O'erwhelmed me with wonder :  
If there be but *one* soul beyond mercy 'tis me ;  
'But there's *none*,' said the voice, seeing 'MERCY IS FREE'

"I thought of the vows  
Which in fervour I'd spoken ;  
All meant to be kept,  
Yet all shamefully broken ;  
Oh, baser than Judas ! can grace stoop to me ?  
'E'en to thee,' breathed the whisper, for 'MERCY IS FREE.'

"I thought of the talents  
With which I'd been trusted ;  
Some wasted on pride,  
Some with slothfulness rusted ;  
And I cried in my anguish, 'Oh, where shall I flee ?'  
Said the whisper, 'To Jesus, His MERCY IS FREE.'

"I thought of the souls  
That around me were dying ;  
Alas ! I was dumb, ,  
When I should have been crying :  
How many are lost, and their blood is on me !  
'Yes, alas !' sighed the voice ; 'still God's MERCY IS FREE.'

“Oh, hōw can such guilt  
 As is mine be forgiven?  
 Oh, how can a soul  
 Such as I enter heaven?”

When in hell there are millions that ne'er sinned like me;  
 ‘It is all,’ said the voice, ‘because MERCY IS FREE.’

“O Jesus, my Lord,  
 At Thy footstool now kneeling,  
 I ask Thee afresh  
 Both for pardon and healing;

And I pray that henceforward Thou'lt keep me for Thee;  
 Said the whisper, ‘’Tis granted, for MERCY IS FREE.’”

J. D.



## Letter No. 59.

“COMMUNION WITH GOD.”

June, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—I beg that you will accept my heartfelt thanks for your kind parcel with accompanying letter. The cushion was unexpected; but, if spared a little longer, I shall find it useful. Formerly, cushions were invaluable to me, but for the last two years, being constantly in bed, I have had less need for their use. When you meet dear Mr. B——, will you give him my heartfelt thanks, with assurances of my warmest love? I often think of him and of you, and it is a delight to do so.

Never, never, my beloved brother, permit the thought that your letters can possibly be anything but one of my greatest and most highly-prized enjoyments. I cannot tell you how much I value them; only I do not wish you to be expending time, or strength, in writing to me, when other duties may be claiming you. But your love, and your loving, gracious words have greatly sweetened my cup these by-gone years. Thanks be to God for EVERYTHING—you can have no idea of the utter outward solitude of a life like mine.

But it is not only *well*, but the VERY BEST, since God so orders it so to be; He whose love and wisdom never fail. You and I are now like children at school, whose present education is being conducted so as to fit them perfectly for the occupations designed for them in future life. Our heavenly Father has His magnificent plan about your service to Him all minutely arranged, and He is training you for this service. He also has His plans about me; and it is delight inexpressible to lay one's-self unconditionally in His trusted hands, that He may fulfil in us *all* the good pleasure of His goodness.

I have just been meditating on the sweet privilege of *communion with God*. The circumstances



in which He has placed me are unusually fitted to excite vehement desire for this communion, to the utmost; and also to help one to appreciate and delight in the matchless privilege, and this in the highest degree. He has built up a wall, high and thick, round about me, to shut me off from my fellows, and my fellows from me; but there is no wall, nor roof overhead, to shut me out from Him. The path is clear between God and me. O brother! I could not endure life did He not fulfil to me His most gracious words: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him."

Two thoughts about this communion have been chiefly occupying me just now. First, the readiness with which God grants it to the susceptible soul; and secondly, the enjoyment which God Himself has in this communion, and both thoughts are very delightful.

How ready He is to grant it! Is not God LOVE; and does He not love His children "assuredly with His whole heart and with His whole soul"? (Jer. xxxii. 41) And does not true love always yearn for, and delight in, the dear society of its beloved? If we then, with our tiny

droplet of love to God, can so yearn for communion with Him, how much more shall He, with His great heart, brimful, and running over with infinite love, desire our fellowship. The child desires its mother's presence; but far more does the mother yearn for her child. And He is not far from any one of us. Not far from the sinner, though the anxious sinner always seeks Him at a distance, and may do so for weary years, but all the while Jesus was never further away than standing knocking at the door of his heart; and the troubled soul shall never find Him at all, till it seek Him there. And the feeble disciple misses Him often, by seeking Him at a distance too. But He is WITHIN all His regenerated children, and shall not be enjoyed while we go seeking Him outside ourselves. I am struck with the words in John i. 5. If Christ, the heavenly Sun, poured forth His vivifying light so profusely on a darkness which was incapable of comprehending it, how infinitely ready must He be to manifest, and to communicate, His life and His light to souls whom He has prepared to desire and to delight in it.

And then He delights, too, in this communion *infinitely* more than we are able to do. Incomparably sweet as it is to us, it is far, far more so

to Him. Into the heart which is opened to His knocking He enters, and sups with the man; and the man sups with Him. Each contributes to furnish out the feast. Christ's love is a feast of fat things to this blessed man. Yes, but the love of the trusting man is a sweeter, fuller, feast to the rejoicing Saviour. The man is His Redeemer's guest. Yes, but he is equally his Redeemer's host. What a thought! and yet it must needs be so, for the joy is the outcome of the love; and Christ, having the infinitely fuller measure of love, has equally more abundant joy.

Since, then, this communion of love is so delightful to Him and to us, why do we enjoy it so imperfectly. Why so many breaks; and why such stinted measure? The fault is only with us. What a poor thought to think that we shall reach heaven AT THE LAST—AT THE LAST! Such is not our Lord's thought about us; and it would be an intolerable thought to any but a cold heart. He means us to *begin* our heaven now, and here, and to enjoy as much of a present heaven, as heavenly spirits in earthly bodies can enjoy. But as it is His presence which makes heaven to be heaven, oh, how much of heaven may we have on our way thither! The measure depends wholly on

our *faith*, and our *love*. “Pray without ceasing,” and what is this but commune without ceasing? “Open thy mouth WIDE,” is the Word of God to us, “and I will FILL IT,” and fill it how?—with *all the fulness of God!*

Oh, my brother! with such invitations and promises let us stir up our hearts to seek with importunity—to seek so as to secure the fullest measure of this peerless gift (Luke xi. 8, 13). Is it not a deplorable thing, almost incredible, indeed, and so sad, that while in Christ all the fulness of God is laid perfectly open to our unhindered enjoyment, most of us know so little about this communion. Yet, there is something still more sad; it is this, that we should *choose* to have it as it is; instead of plunging into the ocean-immensity of the Divine fulness, and being swallowed up and drowned in the blessed depths, we think we do well if we dip the tip of a finger into the sea and touch our lips with the moisture.

“As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God;” “My soul thirsteth for God, for the LIVING GOD;” “I opened my mouth and PANTED;” “My soul BREAKETH for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments *at all times*,” and “Blessed are they who do HUNGER

and THIRST after righteousness ; for they SHALL BE FILLED"—With heartiest love, ever dear brother, I remain, affectionately yours,      JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 60.

"TRUE LOVE IN THE SPIRIT."

Irvine, July, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—Only a brief note to say how happy I am to learn that you are in your usual health. May our heavenly Father greatly bless your holiday to the recruiting of your health and the reviving of your spirit. Most tenderly does He consider the need of both, and most graciously does He provide for it.

How unweariedly good God is. I am amazed and grieved that I love Him so little, and trust Him so little.

"But when we see Thee as Thou art,  
We'll praise Thee as we ought."

He fills your cup to the brim with mercies of one kind ; and mine with mercies of a different kind ; and in these arrangements what wisdom is there, and what love ! Not to speak at all of the different kinds of treatment which you and I require at His

hands, how wonderfully does His way of thus distributing His good gifts multiply our true enjoyments. For instance, here am I enjoying my over-brimming cup of mercies—while I am also, in a goodly measure, enjoying yours.

Yes, indeed ; for I feel at this moment refreshed by the genial breezes of Arran, which I am breathing through your lungs, and am elevated heavenward by the sweet singing of the birds, as heard by me through your ears, and am ravished by the wonderful vision of God's works on hill and sea, as looked at through your eyes ; and all this in addition to my own individual mercies. For true love IN THE SPIRIT does not, and CANNOT, fail to make all our joys and sorrows common ; and this in proportion to its vigour.

And while you are mending your nets, in regard to bodily strength, doubtless you are having many precious opportunities for Mary-like sitting at the feet of Jesus, and for drinking in His peerless life-giving words. Never can I forget the blessed hours I have enjoyed, lying under the hedges, or on the hill-sides around Sanquhar ; hours of rich enjoyment, but which have been cast into the shade by incomparably more blessed seasons on my bed here.

Oh, my brother ! how ineffably sweet communion

with Jesus is, when He really brings the soul into His house of wine, and unfurls over the head His banner of love. You know it well. In such times of love, the soul grows more in one hour than in twenty years of a commonplace, monotonous, languid life. Nothing so gladdens, nothing so girds with strength, nothing so deeply humbles, as communion does. Even the hungering for it, and the seeking and reaching out after it, are infinitely sweeter than any positive enjoyment of aught besides can ever be : for such hungering comes out of love ; and spiritual love, in all its forms, is ever delightful.

Blessed are they who thus hunger, for they shall be FILLED !—With hearty love and warmest best wishes, I am, ever dear brother, yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 61.

“OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.”

September, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—It was a great pleasure, and let me add, a trial, to hear of your kind visit. Since it seems to be God’s holy will that I am not able to see you, then, AMEN ! I was glad to hear that you were well.

For weeks past I have had many delightful meditations, both by day and by night, on God's afflictive providences. Never have I been led so into the heart of the Word; never been blessed with such clear visions of the KING in His Beauty. My meditations started from Heb. xii. 29, which I came on while reading in course. Then passage after passage came to mind; and as I mused, the fire burned, and the light shone very bright, and I felt that the Lord was fulfilling His promise to me—"They shall all be taught of God."

These musings I could not condense into a volume: much less can I indicate them in a brief letter. But perhaps you have some additional light on the fruitful theme, from musings of your own, which would be gratefully welcomed?

"OUR GOD is a CONSUMING FIRE." He is this, as OUR GOD; our God from whom we receive a Kingdom that cannot be moved; and Who, for the present, is subjecting every child of His love to Fatherly discipline, which is more or less severe (see verses 5-12 and 28). All this chastisement He carries on as the Consuming Fire, in order to make us partakers of His HOLINESS.

There is much sin in the most spiritual of men. The truly godly are but few, and even these have



more dross in them than they think. Our sins are a GRIEF to God (Eph. iv. 30). Oh, what inconceivable love does this fact indicate! So He wills to have us pure in heart, and holy as He is holy. And His children, made partakers of His own nature, by regeneration (2 Peter i. 4), look on their corruptions with similar grief and hatred; and they welcome every help to get the evil rooted out. No man is a true Christian whose greatest grief does not arise from his indwelling corruptions; and whose most vehement desire is not after PERFECT holiness. He is not yet perfect, any more than Paul was; but, like Paul, he is so eager in the pursuit of it, that all beside is treated as LOSS; nay, as mere DUNG; and even his past spiritual attainments are forgotten in his ardent pursuit of the prize (Phil. iii. 7-14). Alas, how many professing Christians are altogether Christless!!

God is LIGHT, and God is LOVE; but He is also a CONSUMING FIRE. I know not in which of these aspects He is most lovely, but we do not need to choose between them. He is each of the three to each of His children. There is no child of God on whom his Father does not operate both as a light and as a fire (Heb. xii. 7, 8). Our natural darkness needs the one; our corruptions need the other.

But whether as the cheering Light, or as the consuming Fire, the work of God is carried on in pure and perfect LOVE.

As FIRE, God consumes in us all that is consumable—all belonging to the old creation. Excepting the Christ, the New Man in us, He will leave us *nothing*. As hard, as unrelenting, and as cruel as death, God will carry on His work of burning in us, until His fire finds no more fuel (Song of Sol. viii. 6), for there can be no compromise between God and Satan—between the Spirit (which is Christ in us—Gal. ii. 20) and the accursed flesh. Between flesh and Spirit God Himself has put an undying enmity (Gen. iii. 15), for as he abhors the flesh, so must His children partake his holy hatred of it. And since the new nature is the seed of God in the soul (1 John iii. 9), while the old nature is His irreconcilable enemy (Rom. viii. 7), He sustains and strengthens the new life in the deadly warfare, and deals destructive blows on its behalf on the loathed and hostile flesh; and the new man having the very nature of God, delights in and is grateful for these succours, and is more than willing to have his fleshly SELF burned up in the consuming fire, that thereby he may be more and more freed from that which is now his only affliction. He knows

that God wounds him only to heal ; kills, in order to make alive ; and therefore he rejoices in the midst of the fires.

Divine love, in the saint, like Divine love in God, is holy, and cannot endure sin. It can endure anything else ; and as it is delightful to the Father to exercise His infinite love towards His child by operating on him as consuming fire, so it is delightful to the soul, filled with the love of God, to be thus consumed. Just as it once pleased the Lord (yes, *pleased*) to bruise His beloved Son ; so now it pleases Him to bruise His beloved child. And the bruised saint, filled with the very spirit of Jesus, lies in the afflicting hands, as a sheep before the shearers. More, he rejoices in the heat of the furnace, with a joy UNSPEAKABLE (1 Peter i. 7, 8), and counts his severest afflictions matter for nought but only joy (James i. 2).

Oh, my brother, I cannot tell you how these and similar considerations make my heart swell with thankfulness to the God of love, for having cast me into this bed, and for having dealt with me precisely as He has done. "Let Him *choose* mine inheritance for me" (Ps. xlvii. 4).

It seems to me that there are before every one of us two fires ; and into one, or the other, each

*must* enter. We may choose which ; but no man can escape both. There is the fire of which I have been speaking—the purifying fire of Divine love. It is utterly set against the fallen self-life in every form, and every degree of it ; it will seize at once on him who chooses it ; it will burn up all his dross—all that he himself IS, and HAS. It will consume all his self-will, self-righteousness, self-pleasing, and, in a word, his self-idolatry ; and when all these and such-like are burnt out of him, there remains of the man's own, NOTHING. He is then, *in fact*, dead with Christ ; and if he is to live and act, Christ will give Him his own life to live and act by, instead of the old sinful life which the consuming fires have destroyed. This is what our Blessed Saviour wants us to do ; to strip us naked of our ALL, and to bestow on us instead, a share in His infinite all. He takes our very life ; but He gives us His ; He shares with us His Sonship now (John i. 12), and will share with us His throne hereafter (Rev. iii. 21).

To enter this fire involves, oh, what self-denial ! a self-denial which FEW, FEW, know anything about. They cannot endure to slay with their own hand, that darling SELF, dearer by far to them than was Isaac to his father. And so the self-crucifixion

which all the saved carry through, is left unaccomplished (Gal. v. 24 ; John xii. 25). And what is the only alternative ? It is the other fire ; the fire of Divine Justice and Wrath—the fire of Hell. For every one shall be salted with fire, as a sacrifice to God ; and these having steadily refused the one fire, have thereby chosen the other. It is a fearful thing to FALL into the hands of the God, who is to every soul of man a consuming fire ; but it is a most blessed thing when, instead of FALLING into them, we lay ourselves there in faith, and love, and self-sacrificing consecration. I have said that this is a blessed thing to do ; but to the flesh, even of the saint, it is only a fearful thing. But the new life in the saint can only be truly blessed by the carrying out of the Divine judgments on the old man ; in other words, by God's action on him as CONSUMING FIRE.

The subject is literally endless, and I fear that I fail in stating my few thoughts intelligibly to you. Oh, may the Blessed One baptize you and me, day after day, with a fuller baptism of the HOLY GHOST, AND OF FIRE ! He only can do it (Matt. iii. 11).—I am, dear brother, heartily yours  
in Christian love,

JOHN DICKIE.

## Letter No. 62.

"SHADOWS AND REALITIES."

8th October, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—I beg leave to thank you with all my heart for the two kind gifts you were pleased to send me lately. The first was another cushion, the other a small book by Mr. M——. The air cushions have all along been of invaluable service. I could not have been kept free from broken skin without them ; indeed, even with their help it was difficult to escape bed-sores. The book I have read with the greatest possible delight, and, I trust, with some profit. May the Lord bless his ministry to His name !

I am never out of my bed now, and have to spend my languid days in the extremity of utter solitude. The doctor never visits me—he says it is needless. But the Lord is with me, and especially in my pained, sick, and sleepless nights. I cannot tell you how He condescends to most worthless me. I had such a bad night last night, and when this recurs for a series of nights, my brain gets withered and stupid, so that it cannot be described. It is in this condition now. But it is all well. ALL these are the Lord's most lovely plan of my life,

and I humbly desire to say "AMEN" to everything, as His majestic but altogether unfathomable plan is gradually unfolded.

I think that one of the precious services which, by God's appointment, severe and prolonged affliction renders us, is this, it hunts us out of the world of mere shadows, into the region of absolute realities. We are so given to rest in shadows (the natural man cares for nothing else), and even the average Christian, so long as he is left in outward ease, and with lively animal spirits within, contrives to satisfy himself pretty well amid the shadows of spiritual things. He repeats beautiful words from Scripture and from hymns, and regales himself with the utterance of sparkling sentimentalities; quite unsuspecting, that, in all this, he is walking very much in a vain show. They are, in fact, only beautiful dreams, though like all dreams, they seem real enough to the dreamer.

But God sends some sharp affliction with pale death behind it, and all this spiritual luxuriance is ended, just as a rough shake dispels the vision of the sleeper. Then nothing, NOTHING, can support the breaking, the broken heart, but solid, substantial, Divine realities. His eyes must look upon, and his hands handle, the Word of Life. Beautiful

words and emotional sentiments are worthless now; he must see, and hear, and taste, and touch, and smell. He must look into the deep and tender eyes of the loving, sympathising, Man of Sorrows; must feel the touch of His hand clasping his own. He longs to lay his aching head on the bosom of Jesus, and to hear the beloved voice say to him, "Fear not; it is I who am with thee; I who have redeemed thee for myself with my own blood, and who am now guarding thee as the apple of mine eye." Yes, he wishes, he needs, more than words; he would fain have loving lips pressed on trusting lips, and be thrilled with the ravishment of the kisses of His mouth.

How inexpressibly blessed then is the affliction which necessitates such communion, in which, though the affliction retains all its natural painfulness, it loses every particle of bitterness.

Affectionately commending you to the careful keeping of our Heavenly Father, I remain, ever yours, humbly, heartily, and gratefully,

J. DICKIE.

"I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. xxvii. 3).



**Letter No. 63.**

“TRUST ALSO IN HIM.”

Irvine, October, 1888.

Most kind and beloved brother,—Your letter and parcel on Saturday fairly upset me. I know not in what words to express my heartfelt thanks. Will you kindly accept for yourself, and will you convey to your friends, at convenience, the warmest expression of my thanks that I can give utterance to? It is wonderfully kind for perfect strangers to feel interested in the comfort of unknown and most unworthy me. May the Lord recompense the kindness both to them and to you, and this after His RIGHT KINGLY style of doing so—a kingdom in return for a cup of cold water! Permit me to add that one circumstance in the case sweetens it very much—viz., that Christ is the connecting link in the whole matter. It is simply their love to Him that the ladies are expressing, while again it comes to me simply as an expression of His love to me. Yet, may I add, there is a drawback to the enjoyment, in the remembrance that the mass of human sufferings, through poverty, is so immense, while the available relief is so small, that it is a pain to diminish this last in any degree.

I am concerned to hear about your dear fellow-

labourer. Be assured that he and you, and the needs of the work, are all duly considered, and are being most lovingly and wisely arranged for by our heavenly Father. One scarcely dares to ask (at least for one's-self) for any temporal mercy in detail. For me, my prayers for myself in regard to outward things, as health, etc., are come to this "My Father, I am such a poor, foolish, child, that I know not what to ask; but Thou knowest what to give. Be pleased to choose for me. My Father, Thy will be done." May dear Mr. P—— and you be enabled to "commit your *way* unto the Lord; to *trust* also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Ps. xxxvii. 5). I find that the point in which one is most apt to fail, is in the "TRUST ALSO." One can with comparative ease commit one's case to the Lord; but this is not enough. Having cast our burden on Him, we must leave it absolutely with Him, and not again touch it with a single finger-tip.

Whatever the ultimate issue of this trying providence may be, God certainly designs for you both a richer blessing, and, through you, a fuller ministry than ever heretofore; and it is as glorifying to Him, as it is inexpressibly sweet to ourselves, to be merely passive in His hands and know no will but His.

Think of all the tears which are being shed, the

sad moanings being at this moment pressed out of many grief-laden hearts, and all for what? For things which in eternity will elicit the rapturous praises of these same weeping ones, when before the Throne they recall their present afflictions. Now, they are almost overwhelmed by the grief of them; and yet they will be all but overwhelmed by the joy of them, in a short time hence. This astounding difference all comes out of this one fact—these mourners are walking now by SIGHT instead of by FAITH. They are looking at their Lord's dealing with them through eyes of flesh, and in the light of this world; and therefore are they so distressed. Hereafter, they shall look at them in the blazing light of the Eternal Throne, through eyes which see all things as they truly are, and they shall then see that EVERY SORROW of theirs on earth was a special gift of Infinite Love, and that, without exception, God in His unsearchable wisdom was securing their highest blessing (Rom. viii. 28; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18).

Oh, my brother, let these Divine words to which I have just referred, be held by us in the grasp of a steadfast faith, and they will work in us a grander miracle than that once wrought in Cana of Galilee. They will turn the water of our weeping eyes into

the wine of heavenly joy ; and the more tears, the more wine of joy. He only who keeps the fleshly eye firmly closed, and who, hour by hour, lives as seeing Him who is invisible ; this man alone is preserved from the hurtful mistake of which I have spoken. Looking at all events in the light of God, he sees everything as it truly is, and is not “disquieted in vain,” as all others are (Ps. xxxix. 6). Instead of having his most unspeakable joy in God, and in the perfect working of His will, deferred until he reaches heaven, he enters on it even now ; and is filled with the “Peace of God ” to a degree which is actually unspeakable (Phil. iv. 7 ; 1 Peter i. 8). And this is the very least of it ; for this perfect rest of faith and love glorifies God, benefits our fellows, and procures blessing for ourselves to an extent that no outward activity could do.

But I must close.—With love and sympathy to Mr. P—— and yourself, I am, gratefully and affectionately yours,

J. DICKIE.

#### YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY ; OR, JESUS ONLY.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—GAL. vi. 14.

“My heart was happy yesterday,  
My Saviour made me glad ;  
To-day the sunshine all has fled,  
And left me dark and sad.

“ My tears were starting yesterday,  
For joy sought such relief ;  
My tears are streaming fast to-day,  
But now they 're tears of grief.

“ I felt so strong but yesterday,  
To bear my welcome cross,  
So bold to venture all for Christ,  
And seek my gain in loss.

“ While here to-day in weakness I  
Lie fainting at death's door,  
I never felt my poverty  
So abject poor before.

“ I dreamed my mountain yesterday  
Was now established strong ;  
I'd gained what oft with tears I'd sought,  
And meant to keep it long.

“ And yet to-day 'tis all o'erturned ;  
The brilliant vision's fled ;  
And now I'm left if possible,  
More cold, and dark, and dead.

“ And were it not for God's good word,  
I'd sink in deep despair ;  
But that sure word compels my hope  
And puts to flight my fear.

“ It tells of love that changes not ;  
It speaks of grace that's free ;  
It keeps before me One who suits  
A bankrupt soul like me.

“ It shows me that He seeks for nought,  
In those whom He will bless,  
But weary sense of sinful hearts,  
And guilt, and helplessness.

“ I knew all this—at least in words,  
But little in its power ;  
I know it better now to-day  
Than e'er I did before.

“ Alas ! I fear that yesterday  
Led me to rest in frames,  
To trust in proud self-righteousness,  
'Neath holy-seeming names.

“ Then thanks be to the jealous love  
That cast my idol down,  
And trains me thus to lowly trust  
Upon Himself alone.”

J. D.



### Letter No. 64.

“ A LIVING SACRIFICE.”

December, 1888.

My ever dear Brother,—Your letter of Saturday was a welcome relief to me, as I had been fearing from your silence that your pressure of over-work might have overwhelmed you, and indeed it seems partly to have done so. I am heartily thankful to hear that you are better than you had been ; and equally glad to hear so favourable an account of the improvement of Mr. P——.

My dearest brother, permit me to say in love, that I think you are exposed just now to one of the severest *temptations* which is ever permitted to

try the genuineness of the faith of a humble and loving heart. I mean the temptation to over-work yourself, under the notion that the work **MUST** be done, whether you are able, with safety, to do it or not.

I know well how craftily Satan can bait his trap, till the soul thinks it would be a sin not to rush into it; and I know with what cruel malignity he can work on our best and holiest affections, in order to lure us on to our bodily destruction at least. Alas, my brother, it is because I did not detect his snares, but yielded to them, that I am lying here this day, cast aside into silence and helplessness, for my sin in overstepping the limits of a feeble body. Take warning by me.

Do all that you are able to do, and keep nothing back in carrying out whatever work the Lord lays to your hand (Eccles. ix. 10), but stop there; for your body is not yours, but Christ's (1 Cor. vi. 20), and it has been laid in faith on the altar of GOD, a living sacrifice (Rom. xii. i.), to be used exclusively in doing **HIS WILL**, but in totally denying your own. And on occasions like this, you will need much genuine **SELF-DENIAL** to keep the humble path of duty, so as not to injure yourself; more self-denial than I was possessed of. But I have

said enough ; yet, dear brother, I could not think of not saying it.

In regard to serving God, it would be an immense gain to many, if they could only be made to understand that HE cannot be served at all, except by our loving and obedient carrying out of His will. Our doing of this blessed will always involves what is very trying to us, the complete suppression of our own will. And, to the Christian, there arises here a very subtle temptation. Because his own will is a religious one, and one in itself highly excellent, he thinks there can be no harm in carrying it out. But we are not here to do merely what is right, or good ; but to do always, and only, the WILL OF GOD, and if that good work of mine be not HIS WILL about me, I am acting as a rebel, and not as a faithful servant.

It is to me a thought comforting beyond expression, that, having offered my whole self to God, to serve His will, and having been graciously accepted, no change whatever of circumstances can affect the blessed essentials of the case. They may change the mere SPHERE of service ; but they cannot affect the fact, or the acceptableness, or even the faithfulness of it. For I am consecrated to *do*, or to *bear*, the WILL OF GOD, this, and nothing



*more*, nothing *less*, nothing *else* ; and this carrying out of His loved and lovely will is, in all circumstances, alike open to me. I am struck with the early life of our blessed Pattern—think of WHO He was, and of what He had come to do ; think of the needs of this perishing world ; and then look at this Incarnate Son of God, planing boards, and sawing logs, in a Galilean shed, till ten-elevenths of His earthly life was over. Was there nothing better for HIM to do ? No ; there was nothing BETTER. He had come MERELY to do the WILL of God, and NOTHING ELSE ; and this will was, that, for the present, He should learn obedience in a carpenter's shop in Nazareth (see Ps. xl. 8 ; Isa. l. 4, 5 ; Heb. v. 8). For me, I pray God to teach me perfectly this lesson of absolute obedience to His sovereign will, at every cost. I would fain be as passive in His hands as the silken thread in the hands of her who works with it. So lay Jesus in His Father's hands.

When I began I had not meant to say one word of this, but what fills the heart is apt to drop from the lips ; and perhaps what I have said may do no harm.

With heartiest love and brotherly sympathy,  
I am ever affectionately yours. J. DICKIE.

## Letter No. 65.

“THOU SHALT GUIDE ME WITH THY COUNSEL.”

Irvine, January, 1889.

My beloved Brother,—Very heartily do I enter into your feeling when you say, “It is difficult at times to know what to do.” Yes, to everyone who wishes loyally to serve the WILL OF GOD it oft-times is ; but at such seasons how sweetly do the words sound, “If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him.” And how much a true Christian ministry is simply the being led in triumph through bewilderments, hindrances, oppositions, and distresses, which would appal the stoutest heart, and overwhelm the natural man, we see from the career of blessed Paul (1 Cor. iv.; 2 Cor. iv. 8-12 ; 2 Cor. vi. 5-10, etc.), and He who was Paul’s Christ then, is your Christ to-day. He says, “I will NEVER leave ; NEVER forsake.” We then may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper. I will not fear.”

I have been appropriating to myself, with great delight, the words of Ps. lxxiii. 24, “Thou shalt guide me with Thy *counsel*, and afterward receive me to glory.” What can a helpless human creature need more ? Does not the fulfilment of it promise

to satiate the weary soul with goodness? Divine guidance through life; Divine glory through eternity; and the unspeakable blessedness of Divine communion, here and hereafter.

God has not forgotten, nor forsaken you. Your name is graven on the signet on His hand, and the thought of you never for an instant leaves His heart. It is in unutterable love, and in consummate wisdom, that He has brought you into your present position for your trial and blessing, and for the ultimate benefit of your work; and through these, for His own glory. And though you do not see your way through the maze, He sees it perfectly. Your place is, not to see the path clearly, or to choose between perplexing alternatives, but in simple faith to keep your eyes on God, who walks beside you; and, neither seeing, nor reasoning, to put your hand in His, and walk with Him. He sees the WAY, and you see Him, and this is enough. The simple reason why the ways of God are unintelligible to us is, that they are all in infinite wisdom, while our wisdom is utter folly.

As for to-morrow, we are strictly forbidden to burden our hearts about it. God is Himself carrying this burden (Matt. vi. 34; 1 Peter v. 7). We are to trust our Father for to-morrow's food and

wisdom, taking anxious thought for neither (see Matt. x. 19). As for God's failing us, when it pleases Him to lead us into deep waters, this is the very idlest of all fears ! He will NEVER fail us. True, He may not meet our fancies, not grant all our wishes ; but He will never fail to supply EVERY need. Fail us ? He will sooner fail Himself ! I do not think that you, or your work, need the creation of a new world, such as this is, for your own sake ; but I will venture to say, that if you really needed it, God would create twenty such worlds for your sake ! Let us look to Calvary, and when we see Him doing there infinitely more than even this would come to, and when we recall in connection with it the words in Rom. viii. 32, let all dejection be impossible.

Let us do nothing without Divine commission ; go nowhere without Divine leading. Jesus never did. When the Lord does not bid, it is self that bids. Where He does not lead, it is Satan who does lead. And here comes a grave practical difficulty, which probably you are now often feeling—you have certain impulses, but whence come they ? Are they the promptings of the Holy Spirit, or are they the impulses of my own self-willed religious flesh ? Now it requires both great singleness of eye,

and also much experience, to discriminate between the two. We see a case in Acts xvi. 6-10. Paul had a strong impulse to preach in certain quarters, yet was there another strong impulse forbidding him (see verses 6, 7). Now, since the first impulse was checked by the Holy Spirit, the second must have been merely a natural one—the motion of Paul's own flesh, stimulated by the zeal which filled him. But he was able to discriminate between the two opposing voices within him, and to follow that which was Divine. At the same time, there was need of much careful discrimination and such risk of a mistake that he could only “assuredly gather” (verse 10) that such was the will of God.

Now, in a case like this, how differently would an inexperienced self-willed preacher have acted! Assuming, as all such persons do, that the impulse of his own heart was the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he would have rushed forward to obey it; and so whilst thinking that he was serving God, he would have been serving Satan very effectually.

Ah, my brother! neither you nor I are in very great danger from Satan as a manifest angel of *darkness*; but we are in extreme danger from him as an angel of *light*. He assailed Jesus, and is never long off, and never far from any of us. He

actually deceiveth the whole world, and I believe he finds no class more easy to be deceived than religious men tempted by religious seductions. When he can get us to do our own will, whatever that may be, he has overthrown us for the time. Our great security is "the single eye," which seeks to do the will of God.

Beloved brother, you will believe me when I say that, if it had lain with me, you would have been in no difficulty, and your dear friend would have been spared his illness; nay, even now, if I could have removed his affliction, and have restored him to his service, oh, what a joy it would have been to do it! I say this merely for the sake of adding, that *One* has been all along looking on, seeing your trouble, who, though quite able to prevent or to remedy all, has nevertheless refrained from doing either. Moreover, it is this very *One* who has arranged this trouble for you both, and who, for the present, declines to remove it. And why so? Is it that He loves you not? Nay, anything but that. He loves you both with His whole heart and soul; loved you so well that He came from heaven and died for you, and His love is still the same. It is not from want of love, but because of His perfect wisdom, that He is trying you now. He sees that

you need this trial, and therefore in pure love He has sent it. Oh, my brother, let us, in the assured faith of this, thank God heartily that He brings us into trial, and let us ask His richest blessing on the discipline, but let us not hint a wish to have it removed (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10).

I weary you too much, and would help you better by speaking to the Lord about your need, than by writing to yourself.

With hearty love and sympathy, I am, ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



## Letter No. 66.

“OUR GOD AND FATHER.”

February, 1889.

My beloved Brother,—I have just received your kind letter, and am rejoiced to hear of dear Mr. P——’s health and of your own. How inexpressibly sweet it is to be brought to depend on the *Lord* ALONE, and to find how perfectly He meets every need. Oh, it is delightful when one looks back on a narrow part in one’s path, to say, “I was brought low, and He helped me.” Without these emptyings and fillings, how little would we really know of our heavenly Father, or of ourselves!

My heart is quite filled just now with a thought suggested by John xx. 17. When Cromwell lay dying, he was much cheered by the consideration, "He that was Paul's Christ once is MY CHRIST NOW." But sweeter still is *this* thought—He who was Christ's *God* and *Father* in the days of His flesh, is my God and Father now. What is meant by having God for our God and Father we shall see by a careful study of the life of Jesus. Well, what God was to His beloved Son in the days of His flesh, He is precisely the same to *me* this day. Nay, more. He was ALL that He was to His Son then, just in order that through Him He might be precisely the same to us now; and He has recorded for us the life of Jesus for this among other reasons, that we might know what to look for at the hands of Him who, in Christ, is now our GOD and our very FATHER. And Christian faith lies mainly, not in our believing certain DOCTRINES, but in our actual apprehension of God as OUR GOD and FATHER, just as He was the God and Father of Jesus, and in the living hourly in the joyous faith of this fact.

This simple thought floods my heart with strength and gladness. Of course, all this fatherly love of God rests on us only in Christ—that is, in the *new* life. But what must that love be! If God so



amazingly loved man after the Fall, simply because he was His *creature*, shall He not still more tenderly love, and minutely care for His new creatures, redeemed by the blood of His own Son ?

The second creation goes infinitely beyond the first, as a display of Divine wisdom, power, and love; and the subject of it—man in Christ—is brought *infinitely* nearer to *God* than innocent Adam ever was. If, then, the God of all grace so loved the mere work of His own hands, though spoiled and marred and ruined, as to give for it His only begotten Son (John iii. 16), how must He now yearn over, and tenderly love the renewed work of His redeeming hands, not spoiled, nor marred, nor ruined? It is the apple of His eye; He rejoices over it with singing. How the assured faith of all this deeply humbles, as well as imparts strength and comfort ! If I be in Christ, then God is my Father ! It does not matter that I am so weak and so unworthy, and that I respond so unsuitably to the wonderful relationship. If Christ be my Saviour, then, as a member of that Christ, God is my very Father. And if He be my Father, then it is certain that He is deficient in no single affection which it befits a Father to cherish. He loves His unworthy child, He neglects nothing ; He watches over me, He takes

the most tender care of me, He grudges nothing. And all these sad inconsistencies and deficiencies in me, which tend to shake my confidence in His Fatherhood, I should place among my miseries and wants; and I should spread them out in prayer before my Father, that He may remove them from me *as miseries*, and supply to me *as wants*.

For prayer ceases to be true prayer when we cease to feel, on the one hand, the pressure of unspeakable necessity, or, on the other, our confiding trust in the free, ready, delightful love of God as our very Father in Christ Jesus.

Yes, the faith of all this, and the consequent walking with God, which ever accompanies true faith, is deeply humbling. We can receive and enjoy all this blessedness nowhere else than down in the deep, deep depths of heart-broken humility and of utter self-abhorrence (Job xlii. 6, 7). Man always seeks the enjoyment of Divine favour in the *heights*, instead of in the lowly *depths*; but man, misled by his pride and his fleshly wisdom, never finds what he is in search of. It is revealed to the babes, and hidden from the wise and prudent (Matt. xi. 25; also Luke i. 52, 53). The more eagerly the self-directed man seeks for happiness or Divine favour, the more surely does he miss them, for he

never seeks them where they are to be found. And what applies to the first finding of Christ by the sinner, applies equally to every fresh advance in the life of faith by the saint. Just as we descend further and further down into the depths of self-loathing humility, we become fitted for a closer, more delightful communion with Him, who, when as GOD He became man, became the meekest and lowliest man that ever lived on earth. All self-will, self-conceit, self-wisdom MUST be cast out, that henceforth Christ may be to us our *everything*, while self and the world become to us NOTHING. For if the light is to enter and to operate in the soul *as light*, we must be prepared to have it annihilate the darkness in us, which is so very dear to the fleshly mind both of saint and sinner (John iii. 19).

I am, my beloved brother, affectionately yours,

JOHN DICKIE.

### OH NO, I AM NOT DESOLATE.

“Fear thou not, for I am with thee.”—ISA. xli. 10.

“Redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ.”—1 PET. i. 18, 19.

“OH no, I am not desolate,—  
No orphan lone am I ;  
The mighty God my Father is,  
His heaven my home on high !

- “ No earthly mother, whose first-born  
Lies nestling on her knee,  
Bends o'er her babe so yearningly  
As yearns my God o'er me.
- “ Add heavens to heavens in endless hosts,  
All these but cost His breath;  
But I cost tears—yea, blood Divine,  
And live through Jesu's death !
- “ A wretched brand on hell's dread brink,  
Just kindling, there I stood ;  
While nought my endless flames could quench,  
Save Jesu's dying blood.
- “ And oh ! that precious blood was shed,  
God's richest ransom given  
Now, raised from death, He leads me on  
To share His bliss in heaven.
- “ He leads me on through mercies more  
Than sands that gird the sea,  
There's not a moment wings its flight  
But bears love-gifts for me.
- “ He ne'er repents His grace, though I  
His patience hourly test ;  
But, singing in His heart's deep joy,  
He in His love doth rest.
- “ Is aught too hard for Him to do,  
Who built the earth and sky ?  
Or aught too good for Him to give,  
Who gave his Son to die ?
- “ Then never deem me desolate,  
Nor think I friendless roam ;  
The mighty One, unseen, me leads  
To His eternal Home ! ”

J. D.

## Letter No. 67.

“A GENUINE CHRISTIAN—HIS LIFE AND WALK.”

Irvine, March, 1889.

My dearest Brother,—I feel thankful to the Lord for what you tell me of yourself, of dear Mr. B—— and of dear Mr. P——. We need fear nothing, when our Father's hand is leading us. His way is ever the best. When He bids us walk WITH HIM upon the sea, it is perfectly safe for us to do so.

The three passages on which you remark, recall to me a season of much enjoyment; and I trust, of some profit also. Four years ago, just now, I made as careful a study of 1 John as I was able, creeping slowly through it, musing on it day and night, and spending at least four months on it. It was a truly enriching exercise to me; and, though my most treacherous memory has lost hold of the items of intellectual knowledge then gathered from the Epistle, the spirit and savour of its wonderful teachings remain in measure with me still, and shall remain for ever.

Shall we look a little at one of your verses; that in 1 John ii. 6. The words suggest three thoughts:—1. What is a genuine Christian? He is a man who ABIDES IN CHRIST. 2. What is a

genuine Christian life? It is walking **EVEN AS CHRIST WALKED**. And **3**, The responsibility with which every professor saddles himself. He **OUGHT** to walk after this pattern.

1. What is a Christian? He is one who abides in Christ; or, as the same word is rendered in chap. iv. 16, **DWELLS**. He **DWELLS** in Christ; and Christ **DWELLS** in him: such is the marvellous unity between the two. The man, as taught and drawn by the Father, came to the Son; and the Son welcomed him, and placed him in His Body, as a living member of it (see John vi. 44, 45, 37). And now the man abides in Christ, and Christ abides in him; for the indwelling is mutual (John vi. 56). There is no **UNITY** resembling this in all the Universe, save that which subsists within the Circle of the Adorable Trinity. Let me say it with deepest reverence, that the Union between the man and his Saviour is just as close as that between the Eternal Son and the Eternal Father; as close as that between the Divine and human natures in the one Person of Christ. **ALL** these three **UNITIES** are equally mysterious, but equally real; all alike revealed to faith, but not explained to the understanding. The spirit of the man actually becomes **ONE Spirit** with the Lord; his very body is now a

member of Christ; his body is appropriated as a redeemed and surrendered thing by the Holy Spirit, who makes it His Temple (1 Cor. vi. 15, 17, 19). In his own lowly place and measure, he too becomes—shall we venture to say it—an incarnation of the Invisible God. For Christ enters into the man and takes full possession of him, to leave him no more for ever (see Gal. ii. 20; compare Eph. iii. 17). It is this actual INDWELLING of Christ which distinguishes the TRUE disciple from the lifeless professor (Rom. viii. 9, 10). The man's life is no longer the life of J. T. or J. D. merely; it is rather the life of Christ in and through them (Phil. i. 21). What the man does is not so much his doing, as it is the doing of his Lord (Gal. ii. 20). It is the man indeed who, with his appropriate organs, does all the acting; but it is not the spirit of the man, it is the Spirit of Christ which originates the action; his brain thinks, but it is Jesus who inspires the thought; his heart feels and loves, but it is in the bowels of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 8). His tongue speaks; but, like his Lord, he speaks what it was given him to say; his hands act, but, as Christ said, he CAN do NOTHING of himself (John v. 19). What an amazing unity is this! That between the most affectionate husband and wife is

nothing compared with it. There is no union like it on earth; none in Heaven save the UNION between the Father and the Son.

Let us hastily glance at two or three natural objects in which we see some instructive resemblance to the various degrees of connection with Jesus. There is the ivy, clinging to the oak, and unable to dispense with its support. But this is not like the union of the saint to Christ. The ivy is no part of the oak; it has its own root, its own sap and fruits, its own life. But there are many souls whose attachment to Christ is like that of ivy. Then there is the mistletoe, which adheres still more closely to the tree. It inserts its tiny roots into the bark of the tree, and feeds upon its juices. But still it has a separate life from that of the tree, with its own roots and juices. And Jesus has some attached to Him who are merely mistletoes. But there is a third kind of attachment, the BRANCH, which grows out of the tree, and which forms a part of itself. It has no roots; no fruits, no juices, no LIFE of its own, apart from the tree. It lives on the life of the tree; its juices are the vital sap of the tree, produced BY the tree, through the branch. For tree and branch are ONE. Now, it is this simile which our Lord chooses to shadow



forth to us (oh, how feebly !) the infinitely closer union between Himself and His members (John xv. 1-8). Thrice blessed are they who are living BRANCHES in the Living Vine; but alas for those who are merely clinging ivy or parasitical mistletoe.

But I am too tedious. Let us glance at 2nd. The true Christian's walk. It is a REPRODUCTION of the life of Jesus; not in its outward circumstances, but in its essential principles. And how can such a man walk in any other way? He is constrained so to walk by the necessity of his new nature (2 Cor. v. 14). EVERY genuine saint purifies himself as Christ is pure (1 John iii. 3), and, as the necessary result of this, he walks EVEN AS HE WALKED (1 John ii. 6). This, in the measure of the man's grace (see EVERY in 1 John iii. 3). And how can it be otherwise? How can Christ dwell in a heart, direct all the movements of the man, while yet the man's walk is just like that of others? Is Jesus changed or not? (see Heb. xiii. 8). If He be the same, is it not the surest of certainties that He shall order the life of him in whom He lives, and all the actions of whom He directs, on much the same lines as those on which He ordered His own? And we shall see this more clearly if we bear in mind that He lived that

marvellous life of His, in order to afford us a pattern after which we are to live our own (1 Peter ii. 21), and that He has procured for us the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of LOVE and of POWER to make us both WILLING and ABLE to copy that example (2 Tim. i. 7). And if we be willing, we are ABLE; for, while apart from Him we can do NOTHING, in Him we can do all things (John xv. 5; Phil. iv. 13).

And at what an astounding height does He pitch the standard of our Christian living. Only think of it. We are bidden to walk WORTHY of Him in EVERYTHING (Col. i. 10)—that is, our lives are to be such as to be WORTHY of being ascribed, not to us, but to HIM, as the actual liver of them. Nay, that they should be WORTHY OF GOD (1 Thess. ii. 12), worthy of those who are His beloved children (Eph. v. 1), and who have therefore been made partakers of a DIVINE NATURE, a nature which is incapable of sinning (2 Pet. i. 4; 1 John iii. 9). How hopelessly is all this above the reach of mere human nature, however zealous in its religiousness. Nothing will avail for it but the supernatural; nothing, but the sufficient grace of the indwelling Christ (2 Cor. xii. 9 to 11). And yet one occasionally hears of some one who says he has reached

perfect holiness—that is, *perfect* EQUALITY with the blessed Jesus. But I must hasten. We spoke, 3dly, of the tremendous responsibility which the professor entails on himself. He OUGHT to repeat the very life of Jesus; and he will be judged on this ground. Of course, he has no power to do it. Why, then, did he thrust himself amongst the branches of the heavenly vine, when the only issue just now before him is to be treated as a fruitless branch, and that is a very different condemnation from the common sinner's (Luke xii. 47, 48; Matt. xi. 23, 24). John is very careful to warn against this frightful danger. In chap. ii. 4 he says that the professor who KEEPS not Christ's commandments is a LIAR and destitute of the truth. (See, too, in chap. i. 6.) In verse 5 he assures us that a man's union with Christ can be known ONLY by the man's KEEPING His word; or, as in John xv. 8, by his bearing fruit. For, while John was anxious to warn against this, the most tremendous of all dangers, the Lord Jesus was tenfold more so. Nothing astonishes or grieves me so much as to see the recklessness of some of our modern evangelists in this respect. Oh, what a day is coming when Matt. vii. 22, 23 shall be fulfilled. Nothing is so ruinous as a lifeless profession. The heart becomes

hardened through its unblest familiarity with the Word of God. His worship wearies and disgusts God, as we see from the prophets. Nay, the meek and lowly Jesus speaks of him as a vomit, which He will have to spue out (Rev. iii. 16). When on earth He seemed to be astonished at the perfect readiness with which men assume this position; and He thundered against the religious as He never did against the open profligates. God has no enemy, and Satan no tool, like the zealous professor of Christian discipleship, whose life is not actually directed and sustained by the INDWELLING SON OF GOD. In general, the case of such a self-deceived soul soon becomes hopeless.

My letter has grown to much too great length; too great for you and too great for me. I feel the subject to be a most weighty one; may the Lord, the Spirit, open up its depths in a profitable way to us both. In all the marvels of Divine grace nothing strikes me more with wonder at the INFINITE love of God than what we have been speaking of. How affecting to think of the Son of God dying in human flesh for human sin upon a cross! How wonderful to realise His ceaseless intercession in heaven for each of His redeemed! But, most wonderful of all, that the Holy One should enter into a heart

like mine, and meekly endure such a dwelling. I cannot endure it myself. Oh, it is all wonder from first to last !

It is in carrying out the preceding considerations that I find material for deep and ever deepening conviction of sin. I know no greater blessing than a thorough knowledge of one's own utterly wicked self ; and I know no way for the attaining of this but the constant application to ourselves of the standard by which God shall judge and is now judging us. Oh, my brother, I often feel that Job's "I abhor myself," and Ezekiel's "Ye shall loathe yourselves," don't come up to what I feel. I am confounded, struck speechless, at sight of myself ; and this while in full enjoyment of God's pardoning love (Ezek. xvi. 63).

But how unspeakably precious all this makes the blessed Jesus to the heart. We find in Him **FULLY** every consolation ; while we cannot find the tiniest droplet in ourselves. Jesus becomes to the broken heart its **EVERYTHING**. The man has nothing, cares for nothing, desires and delights in **NOTHING**, but Jesus only. I feel that He is leading me closer and nearer to Himself in this way : emptying me of self and (Oh, joy of joys !) filling me with His own blessed fulness. For we need to be **KILLED**—not

wounded merely—in order that the life of the risen Jesus ALONE may have free scope to work in us. And I am encouraged when I see that Paul felt similarly about himself. In 1 Cor. xv. 9 he is the least of the apostles; a little while later he has sunk down to being the least of believers, and scarcely to be counted one at all (Eph. iii. 8), and still a little later, he is of all sinners the one who is the most guilty (1 Tim. i. 15).

And we never get beyond UTTERMOST SELF-ABHORRENCE here. All our rest is in Jesus only. It is only self-ignorance and self-righteousness that can screen a man from it. Indeed, the inexpressible SELF-LOATHING is always in proportion to the degree in which any one enjoys the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Alas, how many have we whose entire religiousness, a very slight conviction of sin would upset completely. Such are not setting themselves honestly and earnestly to “walk even as Jesus walked.” A single day of HONEST effort to live on the pitch on which Paul always lived (Phil. iii. 8 to 14), would teach the man more of the UTTER wickedness of his own heart, and the hopeless impotence of his most strenuous efforts, than a lifetime of ordinary living could do. It is by means of such efforts after such a life, that the

Holy Spirit opens up to us the most precious truths of God's Word. We learn in this way our need of Christ in all His offices,—our need of the Holy Spirit's ceaseless help, and we are really driven in our distress to Him, who meets us in our distress, and makes His grace SUFFICIENT for us. ONE day of such a life makes the soul grow in grace ten times more than most of us contrive to grow in fifty years.

But I must stop, completely worn out and more, as I dare say, so are you. Though I have been over a week at this, yet the weight of it has been on my mind like a burden. May God, our Father, richly bless you and your work, my beloved brother. —With hearty love, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

J. D.



### Letter No. 68.

“WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH.”

Irvine, May, 1889.

My ever dear Brother,—I am thankful to hear of Mr. P——, and of the work entrusted to you both. I have no doubt he has gained much by his affliction, and lost nothing by his “resting awhile;” and even if he should not, as yet, be equal to the

same amount of work, if the quality be improved, it shall still be gain. I was reading Job ii., and was warned by the thought that though Job's wife underwent the same sore afflictions that he did, she seems to have missed all the blessing; nay, to have been made worse by all that she suffered. And I was reminded of the two crucified thieves, and all this recalled to me cases in which, again and again, I had sustained the heaviest loss a man can sustain, (excepting only the loss of his soul) . . . and that is, the loss of an affliction. Woe is me: the thought brings to me painful and humbling reflections.

You say I had not told you how I was. It was not considerate in me to omit this; but it was a mere forgetfulness. In truth, I grudge to take up time and space about such a thing. I will tell you how I am just now, a little in detail. You rightly judge that, in a short interval, there is not much difference. I generally compare New Year's day with New Year's day; and the new year of 1889 was the first that did not indicate some small descent. I had risen a little in 1888. The severe and almost continual sickness had greatly relaxed; and it continues to grow still less. With that improvement, capacity for food increased; so far,



that, while able before to eat only one ounce of bread at a meal, I was able to take one and a-half ounce ; and am now using two ounces when I can. With this, I take three-quarters of a cup of milk ; and this is my food from year to year. In earlier years I had to take water with my bread, instead of milk, for weeks at a time. With the increase of food, flesh began to increase. Probably you never saw such a skeleton as I have been. For five years and more I was able, easily, to make the tips of finger and thumb touch, when clasped round the thigh, say six inches above the knee ; but I cannot do it now. Strength, too, is a little improved. I have been getting out of bed for, perhaps, two months, for an hour in the evening, and lying on a bed-chair at the fire-side, for I cannot sit. During the earlier years of confinement, I had done this for some hours every day ; but I got so many and such severe falls on crossing from the bed to the bed-chair, that the doctor, three years ago, forbade me, in the most peremptory way, ever to leave the bed under any circumstances. I accepted his word, as being the minister of God unto me for good. For the present, the brain is as intensely irritable as ever ; and sleepless, restless nights are the rule. If God see it BEST, He can alleviate these. Now,

dearest brother, I feel ashamed for having burdened you with such a long story about my poor body. And yet that body is (Oh, the matchless grace !) the very member of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15).

I never can think of the Lord's goodness to me, in this affliction, without having my heart swelling with gratitude. It has lasted now for six years ; and, of all my past life, I thank Him most for these six blessed years. It would be a rash word to say, but I often think it, that I would be well content to lie twice that time, in the belly of hell (if it were needed), rather than miss what He has given me through my trials.

Let me speak plainly, my beloved brother, on this subject. For the present, it is the special ministry entrusted to me, to witness to it ; and I speak the more readily, seeing that you are often coming into contact with the afflicted. The Bible assures us, in the most absolute way, that God LOADS with afflictions those souls whom He loves, and that He does so simply because He loves them. Those who are dearest to His most tender heart are seen to suffer most under His afflicting hand. As to this fact the Word of God leaves us in no doubt ; only, as it is a matter of pure revelation, and can be received by FAITH alone, there are few

who really believe it. The world believes nothing of the kind ; and the great mass of professors, being merely the world making a formal profession, believe as all the world believes. But all divinely enlightened souls, who walk in light, being themselves children of light, know nothing with greater certainty than they know this most blessed truth.

They have learned it first by the plain statements of Holy Scripture ; but they KNOW it effectually by their own deep and happy experience of it, into which experience they have been led by the Holy Spirit. In their experience, never, NEVER, has the cross been disassociated from the fuller communications of Divine love to their souls. EVERY fresh trial has brought them nearer to God than they ever were before ; while every new advance towards God has been accompanied by a fresh sorrow. And, for this reason, the approach of trouble does not alarm these souls ; they know who sends it, and wherefore it is sent. Experience has been working hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, that is, is not followed by disappointment (Rom. v. 4, '5). But the approach of heavy affliction sorely alarms the careless world, and the formal professor ; for these know not the need for it, and the love, stronger than death, which sends it ; ay, and the

love too, stronger than death, which welcomes it.

Our Father never causes us a tear—not one—needlessly ; He afflicts, not for His pleasure, but for OUR profit, and to make us partakers of His holiness. This, I believe, cannot be done apart from much trial. The medicine sickens us ; but then the disease cannot be healed without it, and our Great Physician is well content to have us sickened for a day, that we might have the blessing for ever. And our disease is a dreadful one ; all choleras, fevers, palsies, etc., etc., combined, were nothing beside it. It consists of an idolatrous attachment to creatures, and especially to SELF—an attachment which, while it lasts, shuts the soul out from God, and which cannot be remedied except by measures of EXTREMITY. Oh ! blessed be the discipline of love, which wisely seeks our cure, and grudges neither care on His side nor suffering on ours.

I am delighted to find that you seem to sympathise, on the whole, with my hurried remarks on 1 John ii. 6. It is a great point, (in my eyes the very greatest) this of the Christ dwelling in the believer. I am grieved—rather, half heart-broken—at the superficial gospels propounded in our day.

Free salvation is another matter than most take it to be.

In regard to those who have been given by the Father to the Son, in order to be SAVED by Him, the Son has covenanted to secure this, by accomplishing two great works—the very greatest (so far as we are told), ever done, even by God. The first was:—His great work outside of us, AND FOR US, which we may sum up as lying in making atonement on the Cross, and, intercession ever since, in heaven. This work He has accomplished with perfect success; but, oh! the cost to Him, oh, the cost!! It stripped Him bare—even to nakedness (2 Cor. viii. 9). His second undertaken work is ON US, not FOR us merely; and He shall assuredly complete it on all the souls that are His. This second work, be it never forgotten, shall cost us OUR ALL, *just as really* as the first work cost Him HIS ALL. It shall EMPTY us, STRIP us, to uttermost nakedness. All self-righteousness must be sacrificed, every shred of it (among us, one of the prevalent forms of it is the self-righteousness of *believing*); all our self-wisdom; all our self-seeking; and, what is by far the most trying, ALL OUR SELF-WILL. We must strip off all cherished natural relationships (Luke xiv. 26). Nay, we must hate our sin-

defiled life and lose it (John xii. 25 ; Matt. xvi. 25). Nay, we must nail it to the cross ourselves with our own hands (Gal. v. 24). They who thus SUFFER and DIE with Christ, shall live and reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12). Mere professors, instead of giving themselves absolutely into the trusted hands of Jesus, that He may carry out to completion this second stipulated work of His UPON themselves, shrink even from considering the strong statements, made in Holy Scripture, about the indispensable necessity of it. . . . These men, so far from giving up ALL, give up NOTHING. They contrive to make up a sort of gospel, which satisfies their selfish hearts, out of Christ's first work, a work in which HE did all the losing : but they reject the second great work of the Redeemer, alarmed at the ruinous claim which it makes upon them—to FORSAKE ALL THAT THEY HAVE. The sure issue of this course we see in Matthew xxii. 11 to 14 ; Phil. iii. 17 to 19. Oh, my brother, how it stirs one up to hear God telling us that even the SAVED are saved with difficulty ! (1 Pet. iv. 18). These matters are not duly attended to.

But I must close. With hearty love and earnest prayers for Divine blessing on your work, dearer to

you far than your life (Acts xx. 24), as I feel assured,—I remain, ever affectionately yours,

JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 69.

“O LORD, TRULY I AM THY BOND SLAVE.”

Irvine, June, 1889.

My beloved Brother,—I like exceedingly to hear of anything that concerns beloved friends, and any work that the Lord may have entrusted to them ; and this for several reasons. I believe in the efficacy of prayer ; and I have also a personal reason. You will easily understand that one who is shut off from the church and world, so completely as I am, is tempted to occupy his mind too much with himself ; both his spiritual and his bodily self. To yield to this would bring on him much evil ; and I find no better help against it than to have the mind healthily concerned with the work of God in the hand of others, so as to truly bear them and their work on my heart before God.

A word in your letter sets me a-thinking. You speak of our being redeemed to the end that we might be God's SLAVES. I don't know what is exactly your ground for using the word SLAVES ;

but the word corresponds with accuracy to the Greek word throughout the New Testament rendered SERVANTS (Jas. i. 1 ; Jude i. 1). However, it is not the horrible slavery of modern Christian nations—America and others—that is referred to ; but the very, very gentle form of servitude that prevailed among the Jews. In this sense Jesus was the SLAVE of His FATHER (Isa. xlii. 1), for He came to do His FATHER'S WILL (Ps. xl. 8). His description of Himself was : “ I CAN of mine own self do NOTHING ; because I seek, not mine own will, but the will of my Father ” (John v. 30). It was His MEAT to do this will ; and to do it PERFECTLY (John iv. 34). He had no end whatever but this alone. Even the horrors of Gethsemane, which wrung from His body the sweat in blood-like drops, could wring from His soul no other cry than this, “ Not my will but THINE be done.”

Now, I wish to say it, with all the firmness of a settled conviction, that Jesus has bound us with Himself in the same bundle, and has laid His people, with Himself, unreservedly on the altar, consecrated with Him to the one life-work of serving the sovereign will of God (John xvii. 18, 19). And our faith will turn far more on our acceptance



of this position, than ON ANY OTHER THING whatever. He is no member of Christ who is not His SLAVE. Jesus will confess no man to be His brother who is not doing the WILL of His Father (Luke vi. 46 ; Matt. xii. 50). The character of the Anti-Christ, the full development of religious manhood, is that he doeth according to His OWN WILL (Dan. xi. 3, 16, 36). We see a stage on the way towards this ripened evil in the self-willed humility, and self-willed worship denounced in Col. ii. 18, 23 ; but all Christians, not only have, but also walk by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9).

I am deeply grieved, beloved brother, that this most important matter is so little regarded in the professing Church. The great mass of professing people seem to live in a self-will which is as unrestrained as that in which the non-professing world lives ; and it does not seem to have occurred to them that this is LIVING AFTER THE FLESH (Rom. viii. 13). We are not at liberty to eat a meal, or to drink, in self-will (1 Cor. x. 31). How many Christians we have who never think of eating only to the glory of God. But "he that saith he abideth in HIM, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). And how can he otherwise, whose life is not his, so much as it is

Christ's in him? (Gal. ii. 20). And how did Jesus act in respect to self-will? His life was a ceaseless series of temptation to it; but nothing could induce Him to yield to it in the smallest matter. His temptation in Matt. iv. is but a sample. "But where would have been the harm," asks some one, "had Jesus famishing, and yet possessed of miraculous power, turned the stone into bread? He did a similar act when He fed the thousands." There might have been no sin in the act itself; but the motive would have been all sin, like most of OUR eating. It would have been an act of self-will; not an act done in PURE FAITH and devoted obedience. But He was here to TRUST and to OBEY; and, self-emptied, He did nothing else but TRUST and OBEY. Self-will would have ruined all, as it ruined Adam; Adam's case being also one of eating. And we, His members, are called to a trust and obedience as complete as His. Whatever we do that does not come out of that spirit is a SIN.

One of the great ends for which the SON of GOD assumed flesh, was to furnish us with a PERFECT example (1 Pet. ii. 21). He received a human will that He might give it up absolutely to His Father. Never once did He indulge self-will. No apparent

necessity could constrain Him to that. And He allows JUST AS LITTLE self-will to us as the Father allowed to Him ; indeed, no saint when led by the Spirit is guilty of it. It is self-will reigning which makes hell what it is ; and it is the utter extermination of it that makes heaven holy and happy.

And, while the self-devoted life of Jesus is our example, He has procured for us and sent to us the Holy Spirit, to enable us to copy the wonderful pattern. Of this peerless gift every saint avails himself. We need not then complain of weakness. It is not so much weakness, my brother, that we should complain of ; it is UNBELIEF. Faith, even were it as small as a grain of mustard seed, would enable us to do anything (Matt. xvii. 20). We never find Jesus lamenting His own weakness ; and we could not conceive of Him doing so. Why should we, if Gal. ii. 20 be true of us ? In OURSELVES we are able to do nothing ; in Christ, we, like Paul, are able to do everything (John xv. 5 ; Phil. iv. 13).

The one great enemy of God in every soul is SELF. Self must be cast out. Self works in many forms ; but the chief of all these is self-will. A man may easily become religious, even most zealously so, and yet never be a doer of the will of

the Father (Matt. vii. 22, 23); in which case his religiousness will be just as ATHEISTIC as his secularities had been, and it shall be most loathsome to God. I dare not say that no man is a true Christian who has not as yet succeeded in getting self-will exterminated; but I cannot think him to be one who does not groan under it, abhor himself because of it, and cry to God for deliverance from what he abominates.

Self-will would be monstrous in a holy creature—if such a feeling were possible—but how much more monstrous in a sinner. It is the sin of SINS. Let the Christian dread nothing as he dreads this; it is the very citadel of man's depravity, and the source of all his misery. When it is exterminated, the sweet peace of God fills the now holy heart to the brim. All the disquiet of a Christian comes out of his unmortified, and perhaps unsuspected self-will. In no sphere is self-will so monstrous as in that of Christian ministry, and Christian worship; and I sorely fear that nowhere is it indulged more unrestrainedly. It makes such ministry and worship utterly loathsome to God; it is the laying of a swine upon His holy altar.

Indeed self-will is the very characteristic of our age. In politics, social matters, family life, obedience

to constituted authority grows less and less. Every movement is in the direction of self-will. Perhaps ours is the most self-willed age ever known. And this spirit of insubjection is as active in the so-called Church, as outside. Indeed, very few seem to know the sinfulness of it. In many of the bigger churches throughout the land, we have the teachers chosen by the people on precisely the lines of 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4, few, few, ever dreaming that God's will ought to be consulted at all. And, in smaller gatherings, such as you and I have seen much of, SELF-WILL is a leading principle. Oh, my brother, we shall need to take up our cross in many ways if we walk with Jesus. It is as natural to us to walk in self-will, as to breathe, and it is as impossible for the unrenewed man to refrain from self-will, as to refrain from breathing. In it the old man lives and moves, and has his entire being ; and we cannot escape it, except by receiving, and actually living in the power of the INDWELLING CHRIST. To the flesh, therefore, the renunciation of all self-will is hourly torment ; to live in the will of God alone, is to it a life-long MARTYRDOM. But, to the spirit, it is the sweetest life of all ; for it secures unbroken fellowship with God, the heaven on earth.

It is in the absolute surrender to God of the will that the soul finds its grand point of union with HIM. It is not in the intellect, nor in the emotions, nor even in the affections, that the union is formed ; though all these become sharers in the blessed union, after it has been effected ; but the union is accomplished in the complete surrender to Him of the will. And, indeed, we have nothing to give Him save our will. All our other seeming possessions are not ours, but His. We can scarcely give Him what was always His own. He only lent them to us, and resumes them at His pleasure. But He did not lend the will to us—He GAVE it. It is not now His ; it is ours, and what He wants us to do is to make it His by giving it up to Him. We have given Him all that we have, when we give Him our will ; and we have withheld everything from Him, while we spare our self-will. And, by giving Him our will, I mean, that we use our wills merely to AMEN His wise, and lovely and beloved will, in all that it appoints to us.

I weary you, my brother, and so shall draw to an end. I feel tenderly on this subject, for nothing whatever causes me so much, disturbance, as the continual rising up of this self-will. Even in the secret place of the MOST HIGH it will insinuate

itself ; and, demon of the pit though it be, it will clothe itself AS an angel of light. Nothing, NOTHING, brings me to the dust so often, or so painfully, as this. But I heartily thank my God for showing me, both how prone I am to the sin, and how infinitely wicked the sin itself is ; and for putting it into my heart to cry for deliverance. And He shows me my sin, and stirs up earnest desire for deliverance, simply because He means, at my cry, to grant deliverance ; and I conceive that the preparation of a soul in this way is the bigger half of the whole work. He who gives the grace to will shall also give the grace to do (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

With David I delight to say, " O Lord, truly I am Thy bond-slave, I am Thy BOND-SLAVE ; I am the son of Thy bond-slave, and am therefore doubly bound to Thee, as being born in Thy house ; nay Thou hast loosed all the bonds which hung on my limbs, that I should be bound to Thee alone ; and this by the full love of the whole heart " (Ps. cxvi. 16). And I will make it my daily cry in those other words of David, " Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies ; (one of the most dangerous of which is my self-will). I flee unto Thee to hide me." " Teach me to DO THY WILL, for Thou art MY GOD " (Ps. cxliii. 9, 10). A Christian's whole

life may be summed up in a word—the doing of the will of God (Heb. x. 36). And while all true prayer is condensed into the Lord's Prayer, the Lord's Prayer may be condensed into the third petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

My brother, you and I have laid ourselves LIVING SACRIFICES on the altar of God. Have we not? And was the doing of this not the most momentous event in our lives? Oh, let our offering lie there untouched by us henceforward, a holy sacrifice, because sanctified by the altar on which it lies, which is Christ; and an ACCEPTED sacrifice, accepted IN the Beloved. And let us feel every moment that we are not our own, but are bought with a price, that we may serve, with body and with soul, our Divine Redeemer.—With brotherly love, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 70.

"WORK AND REST."

Irvine, August, 1889.

My beloved Brother,—Hearty thanks for your kind letter. May our Heavenly Father prosper



your work in your absence ; and may He bless your retirement to your soul, and to your body. Lay your season of rest on the holy Altar of God, and use it, as you would use the time of labour, *wholly* to His glory.

I have just been reading Heb. iv., but shall not occupy you with my musings. Let me merely say that we read in it both of the work of God and also of His rest. When does God work ? *Always*. In truth, the continued existence of creation is the result of His continuous action in sustaining it. The moment He should cease to work, it would cease to be ! From the archangel to the insect, every creature, in every world, lives only because of the ceaselessly repeated Divine operation. What an unwearied Worker, then, is God ; and on what a scale ! He slumbers not ; He sleepeth not. “ My Father worketh hitherto,” said Jesus.

But God *rests* as well. When ? He ALWAYS rests. Yes, He so rests that the perfect calm of that eternal rest never has been, never can be, disturbed. *Never*. His ceaseless working is accompanied by ceaseless rest ; yet his ceaseless resting is in the midst of ceaseless working. He rests in Himself. He works on, and for, the creature. He cannot rest in any creature ; for there is nothing in

creatures for Him to rest in ; and He cannot work on Himself ; for the Infinitely perfect, the Unchangeable God, cannot be operated on.

And, in the measure of our faith, we enter even now into the very rest of God ; working always, and yet resting ; resting always, and yet working. Like God, and yet also unlike Him, we rest, not in ourselves, but in Him ALONE. There is no rest for us in creatures, least of all in ourselves, any more than there is for God. But there is sweet rest—unspeakably sweet—for our wearied hearts in Him, in what He is to us in the Son of His love. And we, too, work, like God, on the creature, and for its benefit ; but, unlike God, our working (if genuine) is not ours, but the working of God through us ; and He honours us in accepting us. In this case, we do nothing but what He works by means of us (Gal. ii. 20).

Hence our vigorous working cannot mar, in the least, our sweet and heavenlike rest. For the needed wisdom is given us, and the needed strength, just as they are expended ; and though the bush may be burning very fiercely, yet it is not in the least consumed. He keeps our seed-basket always brimful (2 Cor. ix. 8-11).

But it is altogether different when, in seeking to

serve God, we do it of ourselves; working on the creature, but not *resting* in God. We weary ourselves with vanity; expending our strength, following our own fancied wisdom, carrying out our own will, which makes our service as abominable as it would be to lay a swine on the Holy Altar. While, then, we offer ourselves to God for self-denying working, let us never allow our sweet and sanctifying *rest* in Him to be broken. This peerless boon is the sleep which He giveth to His Beloved (Ps. cxxvii. 2).—With hearty love, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 71.

“THE ONENESS OF CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER.”

28th October, 1889.

My beloved Brother,—I had the great pleasure of your letter last week; and very heartily do I thank you for it. I am glad to learn that you are so well, and that you are enabled to meet the demands which your delightful work makes on your physical strength. May the Lord help you in every way; and may He make your ministry a blessing—not only to those whom you seek to benefit, but to your own soul as well,

It was a *very* great pleasure, my beloved brother, to have seen you once more. I had not expected the opportunity again in this land of the dying ; and, indeed, in former years it would have been impossible. I certainly am getting slowly a little better ; but even yet am scarcely fit for any intercourse. You would scarcely think that our brief interview seems to me as unreal, and as misty, as the dreams of years ago. I know that I saw you ; but one single word that passed between us I cannot recall. Ah, well ; it is all as it ought to be. Even so, Father, since it is the good pleasure of Thy goodness.

I have been musing on what is, perhaps, the most marvellous truth in Holy Scripture—the perfect oneness of Christ and the believing sinner. Can Divine Grace, seeking to manifest its exceeding richness to the uttermost, go beyond this ? Shall we with utmost reverence try to get a glimpse of this exceeding glory ?

Holy Scripture leaves the spiritually intelligent believer in no doubt about the reality of this union. It is *just* as real as the union between the Persons in the Adorable Trinity. And it is as *close* as it is real. The soul, which is thus united to Jesus, is infinitely more closely connected with Him than it

is with its own body. Indeed, it is ONE SPIRIT with Jesus; while even its body is a member of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15, 17). And, being one with Christ, it is brought thereby into the most intimate relationship to the entire Godhead. It becomes a child of God; as really His child as Jesus was, and as tenderly Beloved (John xvii. 26). It becomes, too, the Temple, the chosen dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit; an honour which Jesus enjoyed when on earth, and which He now enjoys in fulness in heaven for ever. But it is an honour confined to Christ and His members.

In Christ dwells all the fulness of the GODHEAD (Col. ii. 9), and through our ONENESS with Him, this Christ, with ALL that is in Him, becomes our very own, even now. At the same time, WE, and all that we have, are made as completely over to Him for ever. Will you let this thought saturate your heart and soul, my Brother: it is as powerful as it is true. Being in Christ, we have no longer anything which self can claim for its own; nay, we have no longer any SELF to make so wicked a claim. Our entire description is summed up in a single word, "A MAN IN CHRIST." We crucified self in that great act of self-denial, when, accepting Christ to be our EVERYTHING, we

gave ourselves over absolutely into His hands for EVER.

It is this awfully solemn and most blessed act of combined acceptance and surrender which constitutes Saving Faith. Sometimes I feel half-broken-hearted, when I think of the delusion which is so prevalent in the Church, that Faith is merely the believing of certain orthodox doctrines. Such belief will do as little towards salvation as the belief of the multiplication-table will ! What hordes there are of blind guides of blinded souls.

I take faith to be that act of the convicted man, in which he CHOOSES to accept of God's great gift of Christ, on GOD'S OWN TERMS. Seeing clearly that God gives to him the whole Christ to be his EVERYTHING, the man takes Him to be henceforward his EVERYTHING ; and, as a necessary accompaniment, forsakes utterly all besides (Luke xiv. 33). So doing, he enters at once into a oneness with Christ which has nothing resembling it at all, save only the ineffable union of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

This is the first act of faith, in which the man passes from death to life—out of the *self-life*, into the *Christ-life* (see Gal. ii. 20), and this first act of faith is but the entrance on a LIFE of faith

(2 Cor. v. 7), which life is the necessary outcome of the wonderful union which has now been formed ; a union which is very real. By virtue of it, the man now thinks, and feels, and speaks, and acts, in such a spirit, that it may truly be said that his thoughts, feelings, words, and works, are not his, but are those of the indwelling Christ, with whom he is now for ever one. THIS IS SALVATION.

This union is effected by a vigorous exercise of WILL on both sides. With all His heart Christ Jesus CHOOSES to be ONE with the consenting sinner; while, on his side, the sinner CHOOSES to be ONE with Christ, on Christ's own terms. We may liken it in a way to the marriage-union, which is formed by mutual consent. It is asked—"Do you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" etc., and it is answered, "I do." Again it is asked, "Do you take this man to be your wedded husband?" etc. "I do." And this constitutes marriage. So, in a way sufficiently similar, is the union of a soul with the Son of God : and the hearty consent to it constitutes SAVING FAITH. It is most tenderly affecting to think that on both sides this union is one of *pure love*. It is in incomparable love to us that Jesus has chosen to be made ONE with us ; and oh, what has He not done, and suffered, in the carrying

out of His loving purpose? And we too, in our LOVE to Jesus, have given up all, that we might be made one with Him. For His sake, we *hate* our own life—we forsake all that we have—we consent to be crucified beside Him; we forget our own people, and our father's house. In heaven, the home of love, there is no love known like that of Jesus to His Bride, except the love of the Father to the Son. And, on earth, there is no love known, that can be compared with that, which glows in every genuine saint towards “the Altogether Lovely.”

Oh, my brother, what a mighty motive should we find in all this for holy living! The least temptation to any sin should FILL us with horror. When I say SIN, I don't mean crime or vice, but SIN; that is, any form whatever of self-living. It must be infinitely loathsome to Him. I am unspeakably touched by a common, yet most expressive figure used frequently in Holy Scripture, to set before us the intolerable loathsomeness to God of His people's sins. They are spoken of as ADULTERY (Ezek. xvi., and many other passages). Think how overwhelmingly distressing it would be to an affectionate, pure-minded, and holy husband, to know that the wife of his early love was unchaste,



and habitually so, and that she was not troubled about it. And with what inexpressible horror would a pure, chaste, and devoted wife, cast from her the barest suggestion that she could abuse her trusting and most beloved husband. She would prefer to be torn to fragments with red-hot pincers, or flung to wild beasts. Does the allusion to such horrible things disgust you, my brother? Bear with me; I am but recalling to your mind, and to mine, a thought which God repeatedly brings before us for our stimulation. The value of this Divine suggestion lies in its ineffable loathsomeness. For to you and to me the Blessed Jesus is infinitely more than any husband can be to any wife; while sin against Him is infinitely more outrageous in us than *adultery* could be in her. And what constitutes sin? Everything that is not the outcome of the indwelling Christ (Gal. ii. 20; Rom. xiv. 23).

The actual bond of union between Christ and His people is the Holy Spirit, who dwells alike in Him and in them. He gives His Spirit to us, while we accept and yield ourselves up absolutely to the Spirit's exclusive control (Rom. viii. 14). The Spirit operates in us in faith and love, and thus the union is first effected, and afterwards maintained. Spiritually we are *one* with Jesus in

*everything.* We share His peculiar and supernatural birth. His crucifixion, and His resurrection. Like Him, we have been begotten by the Holy Ghost (John iii. 5). We have been crucified on His cross, made utterly *dead to self*, and to the world of present things ; and now, risen with Him in resurrection, we are passing through our brief interval of forty days prior to our removal (Acts i. 3). Of course, all this is as yet fulfilled in us only spiritually. In revealing to us these overwhelmingly glorious things, God has not been wasting on us His “strong consolations.” We *cannot do without them.* The life to which He calls every child of His, is a life so very lofty, so FILLED with sharpest conflict and vigorous self-denial ; or, to speak more truly, of uttermost SELF-SACRIFICE, that we shall not be able to face it, much less to carry it through, apart from the help which the assured faith of these glorious revelations cannot but minister to the believing soul. It is the sight of the IMMENSE TREASURE hid in the field, which makes it more than easy for the happy finder to go and sell all that he hath, to buy it (Matt. xiii. 44). Oh, my brother, you and, I can well afford to part with our *all* ; for this bliss-giving union with Christ goes infinitely beyond all that we part with ;

farther than all the waters of all the oceans go beyond the tiniest dew-drop.

Farewell, once more. You mention that your birthday will be the 8th of next month. On the day after I will be sixty-seven years and ten months old. Well, our first birthday was of some consequence to us; for we then entered into existence. Our second birthday was of incomparably more importance, for we then entered on a new life in Christ; but the third birthday, for which we patiently, hopefully, wait, shall be the most wonderful of all the three. Meanwhile we are suffering awhile in hope (1 Peter v. 10).

With hearty love to yourself, and other dearly beloved ones in Dublin, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.

“THE GARMENT OF PRAISE.”

ISAIAH lxi. 3.

“Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His.”—PSALM xxx. 4.

“I HEARD a little bird,  
Upon a leafy spray,  
Pour such a gush of song, as if  
’Twould sing its life away.

“No fear of prowling hawk,  
No dread of coming wrong,  
No prudent, anxious, manlike cares  
Could spoil that joyous song.

“Learn from this happy bird  
A lesson, downcast soul ;  
For ceaseless mercies let the stream  
Of ceaseless praises roll.

“Sing when thy strength is firm,  
And sing when it decays ;  
When comforts come, or comforts go ;  
For *both* give equal praise.

“From God’s unchanging love  
They both alike proceed ;  
His perfect wisdom fits them all  
Exactly to thy need.

“No creature of His hand  
He loveth more than thee :  
Let no one sing its tribute song  
With heart more glad and free.

“Then sing His countless gifts,  
And sing for sins forgiven ;  
Sing that the HIGHEST calls thee Son,  
And sealetH thee for heav’n.

“And ever at the Cross,  
Where Jesus bought thee dear,  
Oh ! let the tend’rest notes of praise  
Pour forth thy heart’s deep cheer.

“He traineth thee for song,  
For endless song above,  
To lead heaven’s burning seraph choirs  
In ecstasies of love.

“Then learn thy lesson well,  
And practise now to praise ;  
In joy and sorrow, storm and calm,  
Thy thankful raptures raise.”

J. D.

## Letter No. 72.

“KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL KEEPING.”

November, 1889.

My ever dear Brother,—I am glad to hear of your work, and above all else, am specially glad to hear of your own soul. “The Lord be magnified who taketh pleasure in the prosperity of His servant” (Ps. xxxv. 27). Our true joy is nothing short of being an actual joy to Him.

There is nothing so important as a suitable care for *our own communion with God*. No service, *nothing, nothing*, must be suffered to interfere with this. “Keep thy heart beyond all keeping, for out of it comes the entire life” (Prov. iv. 23). I am struck with Paul’s words to the Ephesian elders, “Take heed to the Church ;” the Church so precious in the eyes of God, that He has redeemed it with HIS OWN BLOOD ; the Church, whose real keeper and guide is no less than the Holy Ghost ; take heed to feed this Church as entrusted to your care, but even before you do this, first and foremost, “Take heed to yourselves” (see Acts xx. 28) ; and similarly, writing to Timothy, he says, “Take heed unto thy teaching.” It is the truth that regenerates (1 Peter i. 23) ; it is the truth that sanctifies

(John xvii. 17). Error destroys, and when there is truth mixed with error, oh, how dangerous ! How it withers up and destroys. "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. iv. 16), for God makes use only of holy vessels for holy uses (see Exodus and Leviticus, throughout).

But one of my objects in writing at this time, is to express the most hearty sympathy with you in your labour of love, and my joy in finding that the Lord has not only appointed you to it, but that He so graciously sustains you in it. May He give you, through this service of yours, a rich blessing to your own soul, and may He grant also abundant fruit through it, fruit which will be a surprise of joy to you in "that day" (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20). I am often struck with the force of the word "doubtless" in Ps. cxxvi. 6. Only let there be on our part, the faithful, patient, oftentimes very sorrowful sowing, and God pledges His word for it, that there shall be an abundant reaping in joy. We know that no faithful service of a true servant of God can be in vain (1 Cor. xv. 58).

Allow me to express my desire to join with you in that sphere of your service, which is altogether indispensable, *earnest prayer for the Lord's blessing*. May He add His blessing to your work, and

if He see good, grant for your encouragement, some more tokens that He is doing so.

With much love, and commending you with all my heart to our Heavenly Father's faithful keeping, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 73.

"CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON."

December, 1889.

My dearly beloved Brother,—I have just received your most kind and welcome letter, and am happy to hear of your state of health, and of your work. Allow me to thank you with all my heart for asking me to help you in your noble work, in the only way I can, by my POOR praying. I feel it a great privilege and a delight to do so, my brother.

On looking back over my life, which, on the whole, has been a happy one, some of the very brightest and sunniest spots in it were seasons spent in intercession; but this was the case, only when the Holy Spirit condescended to help the infirmities of a wholly impotent man, and to fill the heart with love both to God, and to the human object of the "groanings which cannot be uttered."

Oh, that one could always so pray ! meanwhile, let me say with Samuel : “ As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you ” (1 Sam. xii. 23).

And now for a few rough remarks on your subject of conference ; and I shall be very thankful indeed, if any word of mine should suggest some train of profitable thinking to your own mind. May the Lord manifest His presence with you in your meeting !

“ *Conformed to the Image of His Son* ” (Rom. viii. 29).—The briefest glance at the context shows us, that the apostle is not looking at this great subject of Christlikeness from the human side, the side of man’s duty ; but exclusively from the Divine side of it, the side of God’s grace. He is not speaking directly of what man ought to be, but of what God designs to make him. And my few remarks shall be in the same line. If I were asked then, to say in a single word what SALVATION is, I would reply, Salvation consists in being conformed to the Image of the Son of God. There are two human natures in existence ; that of man *lost*, and that of man *redeemed*. The difference between these two is scarcely less than infinite ; and salvation consists in the transference of a man, out of the one nature, into the other.



When God proceeded to fill the world with men, He created only a single unit. This unit was meant to convey his nature, according to natural laws, to a long line of descendants. He himself represented, before God, his entire race. Adam, thus, was not merely an individual man ; he was the entire human race ; which, in all its varieties, is but Adam developed. This representative man, when put upon trial, sinned ; and by his sin, he not only ruined himself, but he utterly ruined his entire race ; and the nature which he has conveyed to us is a nature utterly ruined. But God, in His infinite mercy, has made provision for far more than the restoration of lost man. In carrying out this masterpiece of Divine love and wisdom, He has provided another man, the second Adam, whom He has constituted head of an entirely new human race, and who should do infinitely more than merely restore that which the first Adam had cast away.

This second Adam was both GOD and MAN ; and the work given Him was such, that only a Being who was both God and Man could have accomplished it.

This Great One, who is the Eternal Son of God, took on Him our nature, yet in such a way that He was not tainted with any of its defilements ; and in

this nature He, the Sinless One, **BORE OUR SINS**, and so made it a righteous thing for God to forgive the sins of penitent sinners, for Christ's sake. And having died in flesh for this end, He was divinely raised out of the grave, in a nature over which "death hath no more dominion" (Rom. vi. 9); in an inconceivably glorious human nature; a nature, far, far above anything that Adam knew, even in innocence. And now, in this glorified manhood, the Lord Jesus sits on the Throne of God, a *man*, and yet, "God over all, blessed for evermore."

It is this **NEW** and glorified nature which is communicated in regeneration. In our first birth, we get the old fallen nature of Adam; in the second birth, we are made partakers of a **DIVINE NATURE** (2 Pet. i. 4), even the nature of the glorified Christ. And the Gospel is simply a Divine call, to every child of Adam, to accept the immense gift of the eternal life, that is, of the **CHRIST-NATURE**; and in accepting it, to come out sheer from the old sin-cursed **ADAM-LIFE**. And just as we were all ruined by the action of Adam our representative, independently of anything done by ourselves as individuals, so every man who, accepts the offered fellowship of Christ (1 Cor. i. 9) is saved, and shall be glorified by the action of Christ, the new repre-

sentative Man ; and this, independently of anything he himself can do. The one great point is, that he sincerely gives up his own old life, and accepts Christ to be the fountain of his entirely new life.

With all the preceding remarks fully understood, one is now prepared to enter into the apostle's meaning when he speaks of the saved, as being divinely conformed to the image of Christ. In our natural condition, each one of us is a DUPLICATE of our first father, the rebel Adam ; and in every act we do, we reproduce this character and conduct ; just as the corn in the field is but the reproduction of the seed sown in it. And similarly the man in Christ, who is walking as led by the Spirit, is, as it were, a smaller DUPLICATE of the very Christ ; and is reproducing, in his measure, the holy conduct of his Heavenly Head. In its imperfect initial stages, God's wonderful purpose is being fulfilled in the man ; he is being CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD.

We may glance at this *conformity* as designed to be carried out mainly in these three respects—1st, Conformity with Christ in His death ; 2nd, in His holy character and walk ; and 3rd, in His everlasting glory.

1st. In His DEATH. This is a point which is

sadly overlooked ; and yet it is one of the greatest essentials. As no man could have been saved without Christ's DYING FOR HIM, just as little can he be saved unless he die WITH Christ. Our dying is as indispensable as Christ's was. The statements of Holy Scripture on this point are very strong and explicit. Hear this of 2 Tim. ii. 11, etc.—“ It is a faithful saying ; for if we be DEAD with Him, we shall also LIVE with him ; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” Note the force of this momentous IF ; and listen further, that if, IF, we deny Him, by refusing to suffer and to die with Him, HE ALSO WILL DENY US.” Again, “ He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life, in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal ” (John xii. 25). The old life must be put off before the new can be put on ; as this double work is never done to perfection here, the saint is exhorted to repeat both his putting off and his putting on, so long as he is here (Eph. iv. 22-24).

We were made to live FOR GOD alone, and to live *on* God alone. But, having forsaken God, we live for SELF, and ON CREATURES. SELF, and the selfish enjoyment of creatures are, to fallen man, EVERYTHING ; while God is NOTHING. This hateful life, which is no true LIFE, but DEATH in sin, we must

get destroyed, in order to have room in us for the true life, the LIFE IN CHRIST. As to the old life *for self*, we are assured that NONE OF US Christians now liveth unto himself, that NO MAN dieth unto himself (see Rom. xiv. 7, 8). ALL men, save the regenerated, live for SELF alone; but NONE of us liveth unto any but the Lord. At the beginning of the chapter, he spoke of strong believers and of weak believers; but all sorts of genuine believers are alike in this, that NOT A MAN of them lives any longer to himself.

Then, as for the WORLD, every man in Christ in his measure feels with Paul; "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world IS CRUCIFIED UNTO ME, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). For to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God (James iv. 4). And "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). It is this need of actually dying with Christ, of forsaking all that a man has, or naturally cares for, that makes the true Gospel so very offensive to the unbroken natural heart. He would like the treasure, but he cannot bring his mind to buy it at such a cost.

And so the multitudes are seduced by some

perverted imitation of God's Gospel, which secures the self-deceived believer in it, in present peace, and promises him everlasting glory; and all at a very cheap rate indeed. But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and *few* there be who find it.

2nd. The second point in regard to Christlikeness which I referred to is Personal Holiness, for Christ is made of God to every one who receives Him, his SANCTIFICATION, as well as his Righteousness (1 Cor. i. 30). And without this holiness no man shall see the Lord; whatever else he may have. This indispensable holiness is secured in a very wonderful way. In order to be made our Righteousness, the Son of God had to die on the Cross FOR us; while, in order that He may become our Sanctification, we have first to die, that Christ may enter into us, as now dead, and may live within us, and act through us, as our NEW LIFE.

Hence the astonishing words of the apostle: "I am *crucified* with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet NOT I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). What an unintelligible jumble to the fleshly reason is all this! *Dead*, and yet not dead; *living*, and yet not alive.

The man Paul now *dead*, and yet, while his bodily organs and his mental faculties were as actively exercised as they ever were ; it was simply because Christ had entered into the dead man, and was now thinking with Paul's brain, and feeling with Paul's heart, and speaking through Paul's lips, and working with Paul's hands. "To me to live is—not Paul, but *Christ*." The active man was but WORKING OUT what the indwelling Christ was working in him, both to WILL and TO DO (Phil. ii. 12, 13). And this is what he means when he says in 2 Cor. iv. 10, "Here am I manifesting every hour of my life, my DEATH with Christ and also my LIFE in Christ !"

In this way is the holiness of every genuine saint secured, and in this way alone is the holiness of any man *possible* at all. We are conformed to the image of Christ only by having the actual Christ dwelling in us and living and acting through us. And when a man is truly *dead* to the old *self-life*, and WHOLLY given up to the control of the indwelling Christ, then, in such a man, Christ repeats, not in its outward details, but in its holy principles, THE VERY LIFE which He lived in His own person in Judea of old. And how can such a life fail to be "Holiness unto Jehovah" ?

I have used the expression, "The indwelling



Christ," because Paul so speaks of it in one or two passages. But the term commonly used in the Epistles is the indwelling *Spirit*; which two forms of expression mean precisely one and the same thing. And nothing less than this astonishing provision of infinite grace could meet our need, could secure our personal conformity to the image of Jesus. Just as our guilt is so immense, and the evil of all sin so enormous, that nothing could make a suitable atonement for us but the dying of the Son of God for us upon the Cross; so, similarly, our utter incapacity to do anything good, to think even a good thought, is so complete (2 Cor. iii. 5), while the life that we are called to live is so high, so holy, so "*worthy of God*" our Father (1 Thess. ii. 12), that no power less than OMNIPOTENCE could enable a man to live on such a pitch.

Christ, therefore, who has already accomplished *for us* the indispensable dying, which we could not have done for ourselves, is now ready to do the equally indispensable LIVING IN US, which we are *equally* incapable of doing for ourselves. And just as the convicted sinner receives BY FAITH the benefit of Christ's atoning death; so, too, BY HIS continued faith, he receives and enjoys from hour to hour, the additional blessing of Christ's *indwelling*.



I mentioned that the 3rd point of conformity to the image of Christ lay in His sharing with His members His Heavenly Glory. He shall keep *nothing* back from them; not even His *Throne* (Rev. iii. 21). But into this I shall not enter at all.

Very delightful is it to me to meditate on these wonderful themes; and I fear, my beloved brother, that I have wearied you. I shall therefore hastily conclude. Let us both—*you* and *me*, my brother—pray for this present indwelling of Christ, as we pray for nothing else. It includes in it every spiritual blessing; let us therefore seek it, in the *fullest* measures which are granted to men on earth. ALL is won, or lost; just as this is won or lost. Let us agonise and persevere, until God FILL our widely opened mouths; for fill them He surely shall, if faith fail not. And let us withal take heed to our more thorough crucifixion, for it is always here where the deficiency comes in.

And in the faith of all this, let us not look in unbelieving despondency on ourselves, apart from the indwelling Christ; on our helplessness, our sinfulness, our utter nothingness. In ourselves, we are DEAD IN SINS; but, with Christ dwelling in us, we can do all things (Phil. iv. 13); with faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, nothing is beyond our

easy reach (Matt. xvii. 20). The old self is crucified, dead, and buried ; and we have nothing further to do with him, except to see that we keep him in his state of death. Let us leave him, then, in his grave of death and shame ; while we walk in the power and wisdom of the new self, which is not *we*, but Christ in us. It is this new self which is our true self, which God thinks of when He thinks of us. And this new self is neither weak, nor sinful. Let us then live hourly on the immense resources which our ONENESS with Christ has brought to us ; let us, in the courageousness of *faith*, venture all lengths at our Lord's bidding, confident that He will not, *cannot*, fail us, nor forsake us.

With hearty love, and with prayers for our Father's enriching blessing on your meetings, and on all your services, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.

### "PERFECT IN BEAUTY."

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."—2 Cor. v. 21.

"Conformed to the image of His Son."—Rom. viii. 29.

"WHAT is the foulest thing on earth ?

Bethink thee now, and tell ;

It is a soul by sin defiled, ,

'Tis only fit for hell ;

It is the loathsome earthly den,

Where evil spirits dwell.

And what's the purest thing on earth ?  
Come, tell me if thou know :  
'Tis that same soul by Jesus cleansed,  
Washed whiter far than snow ;  
There's nought more pure above the sky,  
And nought else pure below.

" God's eye of flame that searches all,  
And finds e'en heaven unclean,  
Rests on that soul in full delight,  
For not a spot is seen :  
Cleansed every whit in Jesus' blood,  
Whate'er its guilt has been.

" He sees no sin, but sees the BLOOD  
That covers *all* the sin ;  
'Tis Christ upon the soul without,  
'Tis Christ He sees within :  
To judge it foul were just to judge  
God's Christ Himself unclean.

" Thou Lamb of God ! Thy wondrous grace  
This great redemption wrought ;  
Not only snatched from yawning hell,  
But to God's bosom brought ;  
And raised the ruined wrecks of sin  
Above created thought."

J. D.



### Letter No. 74.

"GOD IS LOVE."

January, 1890.

My dearly beloved Brother,—Thank you with all my heart, for your kind and welcome letter of the 30th ult., with all its contents, so full of interest

to me. I am thankful to hear that you are on foot, though not feeling so well of late. You are in your Father's hands, who will choose for you, what is precisely the very *best* for you, and enable you to welcome with both hands, and to find true delight in whatever it pleases Him to appoint.

I am thankful to hear of dear Mr. P—— and of Mr. B—— and to know so much, as you have told me of dear Mrs. W—— and her son and sister. May “God forbid, that I should sin against the Lord in omitting to pray for them” (1 Sam. xii. 23), it is my delightful duty to do so; and what you have told me, helps me a little to set them before my mind, as definite personalities. May God our Father enrich, with His choicest blessings, the five precious souls, whom I have named, together with yourself, my brother beloved!

I am thankful to hear of your past conference. May the fruits be abiding; and may your expected conference be eminently under the Divine guidance and blessing. Your subject is a very precious one; may the Lord open it up to you, and apply it with sweetness and power to the heart of every one present. I have not been able to send you any remark; and you will not miss me. I have been a good deal down this little while, feeble

exceedingly, and with the brain very irritable. But it is all as God wills ; and let me venture to add, it is just what I will ; for His will shall be mine. Oh, what indescribable perfection of rest the soul enjoys, when one leaves EVERYTHING, simply to the hands of the trusted Father. PEACE LIKE A RIVER (Isa. xlviii. 18).

I have just been musing, as I was able, on the most delightful words I ever heard ; the words " GOD IS LOVE." Oh, with what gentle power and reviving sweetness do the delightful sounds drop like dew into the tried and thirsting heart. In other days, my brother, possibly you, and certainly I, have argued and jangled over the wondrous theme ; nay, perhaps flung the words like a stone to hit the head of some opposing combatant. What a sad mode of handling holy themes, which can be worthily touched only by deeply humbled penitents ; and this, by them only, upon their knees. But to such hearts, BROKEN under the overwhelming consciousness of EXTREME sin, and EXTREME misery, what music of angels could sound half so sweet, as these three syllables spoken to us from the lips of *God Himself*, "*God is Love.*" And we have not merely words, even Divine words ; but, when our eyes are anointed, and cleared of

all the films with which, through sin, our spiritual vision has been hindered, we see that EVERYTHING which, from the very beginning, God has been doing with us, has been the outcome of that Infinite, Eternal, and perfectly *free*, gratuitous *love*. And when we look to the life of the Incarnate Son, and especially to His dying on the cross, and when we see there, how inexpressibly precious we are to the heart of the Holy One, against whom we have so sinned, oh, my brother, what feelings of shame, grief, joy, love, hatred, fill and over-fill the heart! One can only lie, and weep, and weep, and weep, with the joy of knowing that God is precisely what HE IS; and that, in Christ Jesus, He has taken us to His heart, as His beloved children for ever.

He made us in love, and that He might have objects on whom to expend the riches of His love. And, though that horror of horrors, *Sin*, has intervened, and has broken up the original holy fellowship between Him and us; even sin has not modified one whit the infinite tenderness of His love. It has only furnished occasion for the outflow of His love toward us in other forms; forms, the costliness of which it overwhelms us to look at, when we get sight of them. Not that He condones

our sin. No ; SIN He hates with all His infinite power of hatred ; but ourselves, the utterly inexcusable sinners, He loves up to the height of His infinite capacity for loving.

And now being made *one* with Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are far more than ever the objects of His unrestrained love. He rejoices over us, to do us good, with His *whole* heart, and His *whole* soul (Jer. xxxii. 41). Nay, such is His love, that He yearns for our love in return. He has given us His heart ; and He says to us, “ My son, give ME thy heart,” and true faith ever so responds with all its power of loving.

Will you give my heartfelt love to dear Mr. P—— and also to beloved Mr. B—— ; and accept assurances of the same, my beloved brother, from ever yours affectionately,

J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 75.

“ ONLY ONE GOOD WORTH SEEKING.”

February, 1890.

Dearly beloved Brother,—Thank you with all my heart for your kind letter of the 17th, and its interesting intelligence. You had not been so well in health of late. Tenderly do I sympathise with

you, my brother; but I can scarcely venture to say that I feel sorry about it; for our most wise and most loving Father is working everything TO OUR HIGHEST GOOD, both for time and for eternity; and it seems unworthy of *Him* to express anything like dislike for anything He should do to us. His ways are always *perfect*, as you and I both know and think.

Three weeks ago I took a severe cold, and have been in every way a good deal lowered by it, and I do not seem to be getting over it. How happy to find PERFECT REST in the assured knowledge that every hair is numbered; and in the one all-controlling wish, that the *will. of the Lord alone* be done. Then, all is joy and peace, and the Lord gives me this rest.

Thanks for telling me about your conference, and the subject. It is a most important one; and I fondly hope that you were helped to meditate on it in a way that was profitable. I have known our service as priests confounded with Gospel ministry; but they are very different and distinct. Ministry deals with men. Priesthood deals directly and exclusively with God. Ministry corresponds with the service of the Levites in the Temple; not at all with that of the priests. Our priestly service



is (I think) occupied mainly with the *presenting* to God of OURSELVES (Rom. xii. 1); as Jesus offered *Himself* (Heb. vii. 27); of our fervent intercession for others; and of our praises (Heb. xiii. 15). But the subject is a most extensive one, so I shall not enter into it.

Your life and mine, beloved brother, are drawing near their close. We have learnt from God's teaching of us, amid all its varied discipline, that there is only one single good to be found in it that is worth the seeking; ONLY ONE, and NO OTHER—no *second*. ALL besides is as empty as the wildest trash of a night-dream. And this grand but unique good lies in coming to *know* God, and to *love* Him, and to *enjoy* Him in the communion of His Fatherly love.

Beyond this, earth and life on earth are worthless. He who truly seeks this one good shall never fail to find it; and he who finds it need not seek for anything more. He shall seek indeed for more of this knowledge and love of God, and this heaven-like communion with Him; but he who has drunk of this water shall thirst no more for the waters of earth (John iv. 13, 14).

And, having attained this good, EVERY OTHER good shall be given him in addition, according to

the magnificent promise in Matt. vi. 33. Nay, to the man who knows, and loves, and communes with God, everything in life, every circumstance of his lot, shall be so made use of by his heavenly Father that it shall work out his good; nothing else but only good; and good on the highest scale for time and for eternity (Rom. viii. 28). Outward comforts or outward poverty; vigorous health or pining sickness; a long life or an early grave—*all* these, and everything besides, shall equally help him and benefit him; and he shall be made a holier, happier man by means of God's blessing on each one of them.

And how encouraging it is to know that this *one good* is placed *equally* within reach of everybody; while, what a solemn warning it is to reflect that it is missed because it is neglected almost *equally* by everybody. The comfortable are kept from feeling need of it by their very abundance; the poor are swallowed up by their distresses; and, perhaps, none are so hopelessly hindered as the religious are, by their very religiousness; for, satisfied with religious *self*, they rest in it, and fail even to wish for this true good. But all who seek it shall find it; and all who find it, have in possession the key to the Treasure-house of Heaven, and can, up to

their capacities, "satisfy" (Jer. xxxi. 25) their hungering hearts with *all the fulness of God* (Eph. iii. 19).

Oh, my brother, may this be increasingly the daily experience of both *you* and *me*! Amen and Amen.—With hearty love, I remain, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 76.

#### "INTERCESSORY PRAYER."

Irvine, March, 1890.

My dearly beloved Brother,—I am glad to see from your kind letter that, although not well, you are somewhat better than you had been; and that you seemed to be so far fit for work. I am also glad to hear of your conference; and I earnestly hope that your meetings from time to time may be profitable to all who meet with you. I am glad that you distinguish so sharply between *Priestly* and *Levitical* ministries; for practically they are generally confounded.

There is one special branch of the Christian's priestly service which has, for the last half of my life, been much before my mind—that of intercession. The memories of my very sweetest seasons, and also of my most humbling and painful depres-

sions are connected with it. Never, in life, have I tasted the cup of pure, undiluted blessedness more fully than when, by the help of the Holy Spirit, one got near to God in loving, confiding wrestlings of soul for some beloved one. Joy enters the heart only through the gates of faith and love; and at such blessed seasons faith is lively, and love—love to both God and to man reaches its maximum! Oh! why should such frames of spirit not be permanent? But our watchful Physician sees it best for us that they should not be so.

The highest of Christ's own ministries is intercession, which He is now ceaselessly carrying forward. How wonderful the love which leads Him to share this, His highest ministry, with *all* His members, and to render the faithful among them fit for it. This is no merely honorary appointment; it is meant for hard work, and aims at securing precious results. Our intercessions are designed to be very extensive; as extensive as Christ's own. We are anointed to pray, with the utmost earnestness of fervent love, for *all saints* (Eph. vi. 18); and, in addition to this, we are to wrestle in *every* kind of prayer for *every* human being on earth (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). Note that this last ministry is spoken of as the one to which "*first of all*" (that

is, *mainly* and *chiefly*) every Christian is to give himself up. Alas, alas! who even thinks of it as occupying so principal a place; and who are they who are faithfully discharging it?

My deep conviction is, that no ministry can approach to this in regard to importance; and that ALL other ministries are inferior to it. See in Acts vi. 4 how the apostles placed their preaching of the Word in subordination to prayer. And it is, moreover, the most fruitful of all ministries; in fact, no other ministry is worth much, apart from the indispensable accompaniment of intercession.

I believe that no soul is brought to Christ without some one or other praying for it; though this fact may never be known. Nay, the world is fed from year to year by harvests, granted in answer to humble praying saints.

Intercession is the natural outcome of genuine spiritual *love*. The prayer is dead and formal, which has not been inspired by love; while, again, the love is not genuine, which does not excite fervent intercessions. It never was, it *cannot be*, that warm Christian love shall not constrain the loving heart to intercede for the beloved one. And no gift so grand can be bestowed by any human being on another, as his Christian prayers on his behalf.

But, while true love secures hearty intercession, true intercession goes to intensify and increase the love. There is scarcely any fact in the Christian's life of which I feel more sure than this; simply from the uniform experience of it. Nothing makes love for any one so warm and tender as earnest prayer for him. How beautifully suitable, then, is our Lord's injunction to us, to pray for all who do us wrong (Matt. v. 44). A single brief uplifting of the heart, in *true prayer* for him who injures us, will render all feeling of resentment impossible; nay, it will pour through the heart a torrent of sweet, and holy, and most loving feelings.

Intercession is worth little, if it be not EARNEST. Where *faith* and *love* are in vigorous exercise, it will be earnest. It should be AGONISING, Col. iv. 12—Greek, a *striving*; Col. ii. 1, *conflict*; Rom. xv. 30, a *wrestling*, like Jacob at Peniel. See the intercession of Moses for Israel in Exod. xxxii. Instead of consenting (as a selfish man would have done), that God should destroy the nation for their great sin, while He should fulfil His promises to Abraham, through Moses, and his descendants, Moses flung himself on his face in great distress at the bare suggestion, and virtually said, If Thou wilt not forgive but destroy them, then destroy me

with them (verse 32). It was a daring word ; but oh, think of the unutterable love which prompted it ! and think, too, of the still more daring word in Rom. ix. 3. Nothing, *nothing* but the indwelling spirit of Jesus can excite, or maintain at its proper pitch, the spirit of genuine intercession.

It should be noted that to this greatest and most efficacious of all ministries, *every saint* is *equally* called. *Much grace* is needed for it, grace to be sought, and OBTAINED, through ceaseless prayer ; but no special GIFT is requisite. The man of feeblest endowments, is quite as capable of discharging this glorious SUPER-ANGELIC ministry, as the most gifted saint in the Church. Hence we see Paul continually begging the prayers of others ; for he felt his need of them ; and he knew that the humblest brother, or sister, could HELP HIM MUCH. Let us feel that our need is still greater ; and let us be thankful to all who render us this *best* of all help. And, most of all, let each of us bear in mind, that to him has been committed, to some extent, the welfare of every human being, especially of every saint ; and that we are positively *debtors* to *everybody*, to an extent, which it is wonderful we can so completely forget (Rom. i. 14).

Average prayer, it is to be feared, is sadly selfish ; or, to say the same thing in another form, is sadly *unchristian*. Perhaps in no respects is the great failure of the Church so clearly manifest, as in the prevalence of a worldly spirit, and the general neglect of intercession. Both evils spring from the same root, generally a reigning selfishness ; that is, a reigning Christlessness.

Our estimate generally of the superlative importance of true intercession is most unworthy. Of course, some place it much higher than others do ; but I feel free to say that the man of God who places intercession above where any of his fellows place it, still errs by placing it too low. *No one, not one* of us all, estimates it properly. Let us seek individually to get this great error corrected in ourselves ; and the only corrective lies in an increase of *faith*, and of *love* ; this is, of the spirit of Jesus.

Indeed, where faith and love are lacking, it is better that the form of intercession should be omitted. Without love, it would only be a piece of self-deceiving hypocrisy. Where there is a particle of new life at all, there is always more or less of love (1 Cor. xiii. 1, '2, 3). If this tiny fragment of love were expended in genuine intercession, the praying one would be astonished at the



way in which his spiritual love would increase ; for nothing fosters love like true intercession. And the man, hitherto swallowed up in morbid introspections, and unwholesome anxieties about his own soul, would be freed from these mean anxieties ; for they come out of unchecked religious selfishness ; and the holy love which set him to pray for his neighbours' souls would lift him up out of the dungeon of engrossing selfish concern for his own.

Indeed, all our praying should be more or less intercessory. See the Lord's Prayer ; the pattern on which we are to model our own. It is intensely intercessory. Everywhere it says "*our*," "*our*," "*our* ;" but never "*I*." There is not one "*I*" in it at all. It starts with the recognition of the Father in heaven ; and retaining hold of this, it equally recognises the brothers and sisters at our side. And the praying man asks nothing, in all the prayer, which he does not ask for all the brethren, quite as earnestly as for himself. In fact, the man who is backward to intercede has little of the spirit of prayer, and he who habitually omits it, has *none*.

Beloved brother, this subject moves me deeply. Few things in the review of my past life humble me more than my mournful deficiencies in this

respect. Such a word as Rom. ix. 3 strikes me dumb. And if there be one thing which more than another, I would hunger and thirst to be filled with, it is the spirit of faith and of love in such fulness and vigour, that I should find my ceaseless employment in communion with *God* and intercession for *men*.

With heartfelt love, I remain, my dearest brother,  
ever yours affectionately, JOHN DICKIE.

#### IMPORTUNITY.

“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”—LUKE xviii. 1.

“PRAY on, thou weeping, wrestling saint,  
Thy God, though silent, hears ;  
He registers each sad complaint,  
He bottles all thy tears.

“Though instant answer be not given,  
Thy cry He doth not spurn ;  
Each prayer sent weeping up to heaven,  
With laughter shall return.

“Who gave His Son, shall give thee all  
Thy utmost need can want ;  
Oh, wert thou half as prompt to call,  
As He is prompt to grant !

“Then be not like the faithless king,  
Who smote but thrice, and stayed ;  
Smite on, until thy smiting bring  
The answer which it prayed.

“Each tear, now glistening in thine eyes,  
Shall glitter in thy crown ;  
And groans, which scarce have strength to rise,  
Can bring great burdens down.

“ Trust to thine Advocate on high,  
Whose pleadings never fail ;  
His word, which backs the feeblest cry,  
Shall make that cry prevail.”

J. D.

---

### Letter No. 77.

“ JESUS ALONE CAN SATISFY.”

June, 1890.

My beloved Brother,—I thank you heartily for your kind letter this morning. I have been a little anxious lest you were ailing ; but your letter relieves me. Your work is slackening a little ; and now, with God’s blessing on your season of retirement, I fondly hope that both body and spirit may be freshly tuned for further service. I fondly hope, too, that Mr. P—— keeps moderately well ; also Mr. B——, and that the aged disciples, Mrs. W—— and Mrs. M——, with Mr. W., all of whom are often in my mind, are as well as can be looked for at their advanced years.

May the Lord make His grace sufficient for them ; as *indeed He will*. You see for the knowledge of so many dear ones, the thoughts of whom are very delightful to me, I am indebted to you.

I am keeping much about the same ; on the whole, slowly, slowly getting a little stronger.

Just now, I rise from my bed after dinner, and lie (I cannot sit) in a bed-chair at the fire until tea-time. This is a little change. I have felt it a very solemn time, just now. It is seven years, about ten days ago, since God in His great goodness, laid me down on this bed, and shut me out from all companionship, save His own. I have always kept the anniversary as a day set apart ; but it has been a more solemn season this year than ever before. Oh, my brother, the Lord has been good to me in sending me this long affliction ; often, often have I been constrained to say to myself in the fervour of my feelings, that I would have been well contented to have lain for twice the time, in the belly of hell, to see what I have seen of His beauty, or tasted of His grace, as He has given it to me to drink, hundreds and hundreds of times, during these seven golden years !

For me, brother, I feel that it is life enough to be just what it pleases God I should be ; and blessedness enough that I should ever be beside Himself ; and ministry enough that I should do, or bear, whatever He appoints me ; and heaven enough (for the present) to be in circumstances amid which, in His infinite love and wisdom, He has seen it best to set me. Oh, may he root out

and exterminate in me all impatience, and self-will, and self-seeking; for these are the very essence of the bottomless pit, and make it what it is.

You speak in your letter, dear brother, of your feeling yourself more and more a stranger when you revisit your native land. And this feeling will increase. Our true home is elsewhere; and the lively soul feels more and more detached from earth (except merely as the sphere of service), and more and more attracted to heaven. "To depart and be with Christ, which is far better—nevertheless." Let us listen then to our Father's exhortation, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as *strangers* and *pilgrims*," to walk accordingly (1 Peter ii. 11). What comfort did Jesus ever find from this world, save only the great joy (Heb. xii. 2) of glorifying His Father, and bringing blessing to men? And, just in the measure in which we are FILLED with His Spirit, shall our experiences from earth be the same. The mystery of our life shall be altogether misunderstood by us, unless we see in it our Father's method of training us to feel deep, and ever-deepening desires, which *Jesus alone* can satisfy.

And He does satisfy these "vehement desires;" and FAR MORE. He fills every receptive cup, till the over-filled cup RUNNETH OVER, and there is

no more room to receive (Ps. xxiii. 5 ; Mal. iii. 10). We are **ALREADY** in heaven (Eph. ii. 6) ; and though for the present this ascension be only in *Christ our Head*, still it gives us a title to as much of the heavenly blessedness, as we have faith enough to appropriate and enjoy. There is not a particle of all the good things of the better land kept back from us, if only we be capable of enjoying them (Eph. i. 3). Equally true, we are still in the wilderness, and **NOT** in heaven ; oft-times sharply beset by the devil, the world, and the remains of the unmortified flesh ; and, since there is a need-be for it, we are oft-times in heaviness through manifold temptations. But both of these help the pilgrim forward ; both the joys of faith, and the present sorrows of the way. The realised joys sweeten for us the experienced sorrows ; while these last deliver us from some of the dangers which the self-indulgent misuse of the enjoyments would expose us to.

Yes, indeed, we may have very much of heaven here. Until I was laid down on this bed, I had not known how very much. For what is it that constitutes the blessedness of heaven ? It is not anything that is to be found in the creature there. It will be found in the most intimate and unhindered

communion of trusting love ; in which communion the Father will open up the riches of His grace and of His glory, as fully as His children will be able to bear, and in which the enlarged capacities of the glorified will all be filled to the utmost, with the enjoyed communion and service of the Lord, the God of HOLY LOVE. But these very things may, in the measure of the saint, be enjoyed HERE and NOW ; and he is the wisest, healthiest, and most Christ-like man, who is able to appropriate the most of them.

Towards this blessed life our Father is both gently driving, and also sweetly drawing us, by means of our present mingled experiences. Year after year, are you and I not finding that certain sources of enjoyment are taken away from us, while other enjoyments are made to us sweeter and more abundant ? God is weaning us from all rest in present things, even when these are lawful, or even laudable, that we may find all our rest in Himself *alone*. Therefore is His treatment of us so strangely mixed, simply because we ourselves are so strangely mixed ; and the one mixture needs the other. For there is FLESH in us as well as spirit ; a something which needs to be smitten, and wounded, and bereft of what it values idolatrously ; as well as another

something which needs to be fed, and comforted, and strengthened. For there is that in us which God is daily bringing down towards the dust of death ; also that which He is leading up towards the throne of glory. And so He sends us sometimes the soft rain and the vivifying sunshine ; and, after a little while, the nipping frost, and the blighting east wind. But every case is lovingly dealt with according to its special need, and what that need is, is settled by a wisdom which cannot go wrong. How easy should it be for us, then, to commit ourselves, without a fear, into the trusted hands of infinite *Love* ; while we abhor the thought of taking ourselves out of such hands.

Our greatest temptation to feel wrongly on these matters arises from the deference, which we are too ready to pay, to the judgment of our FLESHLY minds, and of the fleshly minds of ALL AROUND US, both in the Church and world ; for the number of those who look on these things in the light of God is so infinitesimally small, that it has no influence on the general judgment. If a man would learn what poverty is, in God's estimate, and what wealth is ; which is the greater evil of the two ; or rather, which of the two it is that is the danger, let him consult the Word of God. If he desires to know whether God



values the exemption of His children from bodily sufferings, let him study the Word. Or, if he would ascertain how much, or how little, God esteems the applause of men, in order that he himself may be delivered from valuing it too highly, again let him turn to the Word. These are the matters on which men set their hearts; and in their pursuit of which, life is wasted, and every precious interest recklessly sacrificed. But, in God's eyes, ALL these things are very small; nay, not even small; they are *nothing*, and LESS THAN NOTHING. And faith, which looks at all things in the light of God, counts them to be only so much loss and dung. But the Esaus, self-deluded, all sell their birthright for a morsel of meat. Oh, it takes a great vigour of faith to resist the mighty current which flows all around us!

My beloved brother, your time and mine here is drawing near its close. With my whole heart, I join you in beseeching from our Father, the fullest measure of the Pilgrim-Spirit. Whether our remaining days be many, or be very few; whether spent in robust health, or in pining sickness; whether our appointed ministry shall be one of active labour, or of patient suffering, *matters* NOTHING; the ONE POINT is that we be WHERE GOD HAS SET US, and laid without reserve upon His altar, to do ALL His

will, and NOTHING save His will ; and this by our labour, or our patience, as He appoints. Set down on one side threescore years and ten of average Christian character and service, and on the other, a brief five minutes of true Christlike self-surrender to the perfect will of God, with closest communion with Him ; and the five minutes are worth the seventy years, *many times over*.

But I shall not occupy your time more ; and now, commending you to the sufficient grace of our Blessed Lord as heartily as I commend myself, I remain, my beloved brother, ever yours in the Love which belongs to the Eternal Life, J. DICKIE.



### Letter No. 78.

“AS MANY AS I LOVE I REBUKE AND CHASTEN.”

Irvine, July, 1890.

My dearly beloved Brother,—I was so glad to receive your kind letter ; and to learn from it where you are, and something about your health. I hope that your rustications, at this time, may set up your bodily vigour a little ; but be quite sure that God shall give you either increase of strength, or SOMETHING BETTER.

Indeed, among all that God sends us in His Pro-

vidence, there is nothing which, in itself, is either a good or an evil. Men presume to separate events into two classes; and they judge the one class to be good, and the other to be evil. But human judgments are always false; for they leave GOD out of the reckoning, and they make SELF, and its interests and convenience, the one standard according to which things are valued. There is nothing good or evil IN ITSELF; it is OUR USE OF IT which makes it, to us, either good or evil.

When a child of God, full of faith and love, welcomes all his trusted Father's arrangements for him, then, though there be much of what is falsely counted evil in this arrangement, yet the whole works together, in his case, ONLY for good; nay, the sorest evils turn out to be the most precious goods (Rom. viii. 28). On the other hand, when a man receives the Divine arrangement for him, in the spirit of unbelieving SELFHOOD (as is the almost universal case), then EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE in that lot is turned into an evil to the man; and, the greater the good, the worse the mischief which the abuse of it produces. It is not that anything in the lot was evil; the evil heart of the man turned the whole into evil. Food may be the choicest, and most wholesome, but, if put into a stomach

sufficiently deranged, the whole becomes a source, not of comfort or of strength, but of suffering.

In truth, there is NO ONE, and NOTHING good but ONE: that is God. And there is nothing evil, but only SIN; sin, which is an entirely different thing from what it is often identified with—viz., crime or vice. The horrible thing, SIN, against which God's wrath burns like a furnace, is simply SELFHOOD in every one of its forms; self-will, self-enjoyment, self-seekings, self-righteousness, and SELF, in all its many varieties of working. He who is not saved from SELF is not saved from anything. Everything which helps us to glorify God, and to enjoy Him alone, that is to us a precious good; but everything which tempts us, or enables us to indulge self, in enjoying creatures apart from God, is an evil. It may be a perverted good; in which case, we have turned what God gave us for a blessing into what the prophet calls a CURSED BLESSING. The lot of Dives in his palace was a miserable one; his selfishness and unbelief made it so; the lot of Lazarus starving on the pavement was a blessed one; his faith and love made it so. May God give me faith and love like his; and I shall be glad to be laid down beside him among the dogs.

If you look back on your own life, dear brother,

or, should that field be too narrow, if you will enlarge it by examining all that you can discover of the Lord's dealings with His beloved children, you will find that it is exclusively by providences which bring suffering and sorrow to us, that our faith and love are tested, and are also strengthened. I don't think you will easily find an exception to the statement, "AS MANY AS I LOVE I REBUKE AND CHASTEN." If under the severe and bitter CROSS a man does not discern the hand of God in sending it, where is the man's FAITH? But, if discerning the fact that God has sent him the cross, the man does not welcome it, and love it, and choose to endure it (not indeed for its own sake, but for His sake who sent it), where, in this case, is the man's LOVE? Oh, my brother, it is easy, easy to the fleshly mind, to rejoice in the outward comforts with which God may please to fill the cup; but joy of this kind is only fleshly joy, and does not mount very high; but, to see God's infinite love in the bitter cross, and to have all the bitterness of the cross taken completely away by the sweetness of the trusted LOVE, this gives a joy which is simply UNSPEAKABLE, and all other delights accessible to man are, compared with this, simply as NOTHING AT ALL. I speak that I do know.

God means our joy, our perfect joy, a joy that shall be full and eternal ; and ALL His treatment of every child of His is aiming at securing this joy. But it is our genuine happiness which He seeks (or rather our BLESSEDNESS, which is a much higher thing) ; it would not satisfy His love for us to give us such a happiness as would meet the desires only of the spiritually unwise ; the happiness He designs for us is one which rests upon Himself ; which, in short, is of the same nature with His own. It is into nothing less than "the JOY OF THE LORD" that He invites us to enter. And towards this true and perfect happiness He is, in this present life, lovingly drawing us ; while He also gently drives us. He is drawing us with the powerful attractions presented to us in the revealed glories of His infinite grace in Christ Jesus, and by the incomparable sweetness of as much unhindered communion of love with Himself as we are ready to enjoy. And He is driving us, gently driving, by gradually dropping bitterness into the poisonous cisterns, broken cisterns, which we have hewn out for our fleshly solace ; for, unless we be delivered, with our own consent, from lusting after these, we would drink ourselves to death. And the withdrawal of these corrupt and corrupting waters is no

loss to us. It is an infinite gain, for it sends us to drink, in our thirst, from the RIVERS of pleasures, which are at His own right hand. He that drinks of the water which Jesus gives shall NEVER THIRST AGAIN. Oh, my brother beloved, do we fully believe this? Then let us manifest in our lives, that we need nothing else whatever, but only more and more of that Christ, whom God has given to us, to be our EVERYTHING.

My health continues about what it was; but to say so means really nothing. Changes are so slow with me that to compare, say, this month with last, there is no difference discernible. But I am being moved upwards; and the progress becomes noticeable, say, at intervals of a year. It is over seven years since I was laid down. For a long time I had much suffering; I think I may venture to say VERY MUCH. For four and a-half years the progress was steadily, but slowly, downwards. But two years and a half ago a change began. A heavy sickness every day, for twenty hours out of the twenty-four, began very gradually to lighten, and continued to do so, till now it is nearly gone. After that, the appetite slowly improved. I live on bread and milk alone; the quantities weighed and measured. At the time the improvement began,



I had been using, at each meal, one ounce of bread, with three-quarters of a cupful of milk, when able to use milk, or of water when I couldn't. But I was able to raise the amount of bread to an ounce and a-half, and again I brought it up, some time ago, to two ounces, the milk or the water continuing the same. Then the flesh began to gather a little on the bones. I had been sorely reduced. Over six years ago they brought in a machine and weighed me. With full dress, including heavy overcoat and boots, I stood 86 pounds and a-half. I sunk far below that afterwards, but I know not how much. My strength was very feeble. Often, often, often, did I fall on the floor, staggering between the bed and a bed-chair at the fire; till three years ago, the doctor strictly prohibited the attempt. Till very lately, then, I was never out of bed. With the improvement referred to, the brain (oh, what I have suffered from the brain) began to get a little more calm; and, after a time, this told on my sleep. I can scarcely think that any one can have suffered more distressingly from want of sleep than I have done. I sleep miserably yet; but the distress from weeks and months of insufficient sleep is very greatly modified. My strength is not much recovered. I get out of bed, just now



after dinner, and lie in the bed-chair till tea-time. Neither does my brain stand the excitement of company. If God sees it fit, He shall give a little improvement in these respects ; but if not, I DON'T WISH IT. Oh, my brother, I have HIMSELF, His entire and undivided SELF ; and I may well say, as I do venture to say it, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places ; I have a goodly heritage."

Forgive me for troubling you with all this, which perhaps you will not, after all, think it a trouble to read. If our places were changed, I feel sure that I would like to hear of the Lord's similar dealings with you. And, perhaps, you may be able to encourage some sufferer, when you meet one who needs encouragement, by telling him you have a friend who has been long under God's afflicting hand, and who would not be troubled at the prospect of going through the whole again, IF ONLY THE LORD CALLED TO IT.

But I must hastily close.—With many thanks once more, and with much love, I remain, my beloved brother, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



## WHY WEEPEST THOU ?

“I am poor and needy ; yet the Lord thinketh upon me.”—

PSALM xl. 17.

“God careth for thee, weeping one,  
His hand is round thee now ;  
For thee His *best* is always done ;  
Oh then, why weepest thou ?

“God loves thee well, thou troubled one,  
Heaven wonders at such love ;  
He loves thee as He loveth none  
In angel ranks above.

“Throughout the earth His earnest eye  
Hath careful searched, to see  
What spot it was beneath the sky  
That *best* befitted thee.

“Yet thou that chosen holy place  
Profanest now with tears ;  
And when thy soul should sing its praise,  
It weeps its idle fears.

“Oh wherefore, wherefore, dost thou wrong  
His heart who loves thee so ?  
And rob Him of thy tribute song,  
To nurse thy thankless woe ?

“If thou must weep, then weep for joy  
That God **THY FATHER** is ;  
Whose grace does all its powers employ  
To load thy soul with bliss.

“Yes, weep o’er the forgotten love  
That guards thee every day ;  
Not only crowns thine end above,  
But blesses all the way.”

## Letter No. 79.

A VERY BITTER CUP, AND HOW IT WAS MADE SWEET.

Irvine, 9th October, 1890.

My dearly beloved Brother,—Your parcel duly reached me yesterday afternoon. I really know not how to thank you for your great kindness. Your love FOR CHRIST'S SAKE is, and has been all these years, a great solace to me, indeed, one of my greatest, and all the greater that I feel it so undeserved. So far, then, as any gift is an expression of your love in Christ, I welcome it with the greatest joy, and am glad to be your debtor for it. But when it comes to putting yourself or others TO EXPENSE, I shrink from that. But a Christian's love, I prize it as priceless in its value; it is Christ's own love AT SECOND-HAND. I welcome it gratefully, and I pray God, our Father, to give me grace to love increasingly all who are dear to Him. Be graciously pleased to accept my warmest heart-felt thanks.

It was a great pleasure, dearest brother, to see you face to face. I have been much the same ever since. I was none the better of being down in the garden. Even with the help, the effort of climbing the stairs was certainly too much; but it was some seven years since I had stood under God's open

sky, and you can scarcely enter into the feeling of thankful gladness, with which I enjoyed the opportunity. But ever since I saw you, I have been confined to my garret again; able, however, to get out of bed after dinner, and to lie in the bed-chair till between six and seven.

But looking back on past years, I see that I have got wonderfully upwards for some time past. I could not POSSIBLY have gone to the door at all before this summer, and for a number of years bodily life was nothing to me but simply a bundle of miseries; much pain, constant sickness, and an utter prostration of all strength, which was more distressing than any pain or any sickness. It is not so now. I have some few enjoyments in life. I can read a little, and can enjoy the writing a letter to some beloved friend. I am speaking only of OUTWARD enjoyment, for all along the Lord was with me, and made His grace TO ABOUND. I don't suppose that in this world of trial many lives have been happier than mine during the last seven years. God is ENOUGH for us.

I come of a short-lived, unhealthy race. My father's people were country-folk, strong and vigorous; he himself was the feeblest of the family, and died at forty-six sharp. But I don't take after his

people. I got my constitution from my mother's side. 'They were delicate and short-lived. My grandfather died, I know not at what age, but it must have been early, for his wife survived him for many years and died at forty-one. They had two children — daughters, of whom the elder and healthier, died at twenty ; and the younger, and more delicate, my mother, died at thirty-seven, after spending the last ten years in bed, afflicted with spinal disease in its worst form. She had long been labouring under it before being laid down, and I believe it was my birth which cast her into bed. She was ill-advised, and nursed me as well as she could, thereby doing herself irreparable injury, and destroying my prospects of tolerable health. And so it came to pass, I have had a worse struggle with feeble health all my life, and it looks wonderful to me that I have crawled along to near sixty-eight years.

But I stupidly forget that all this is of no interest to you, though it is full of interest to me. Let me only say then, to bring this to an end, that all this was the wise and loving way, which God, our Father, chose for me, in order that He might do the BEST for me that could be done. I have not the faintest shadow of a regret that I was

appointed to life-long weakness before I was born. HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL. It is a small, small matter, for a man destined to eternity, that he should lose the brief, tiny fragments of time. But I have not lost EVEN THAT. Oh, my brother, he has lost NOTHING who, through his seeming losses, has really found Christ, or rather, has been found of Him. And when I look at my healthy kinsmen and neighbours, in few of whom I have any spiritual comfort, I can only wonder at the infinite grace which has led me, the equally hard-hearted and world-loving, to the Saviour, who, when He saw that with their health I would have trodden in their path, did not shrink from blasting the health, and putting bitterness into the world, that, being both driven and drawn, I might find CHRIST TO BE EVERYTHING TO ME. Who should louder sing than I?

Sometimes in the earlier days of my confinement, (when, as I often did, I felt as if I should lose my reason, and could only cry to God to keep me from losing it), a thought would drop into my mind, "My cup is truly bitter." I knew in a moment where the thought had come from, and could only cast it on the Lord to drive off the cruel adversary, who would fain breed dispeace between Him and

me. He never failed to afford succour, and I got rid of the preposterous notion. And then I allowed my mind to dwell calmly and restfully upon a few considerations, which never failed to make me ashamed that I could be so easily tempted with a thought so monstrous, as that God had put into my hand a bitter cup. These considerations I had occasion, in these days, to go over so often, that they had become as familiar to me as the words of a catechism.

They were these : First, There is no denying that, TO NATURE, my cup has very much of bitterness in it ; but I am not drinking it IN NATURE, and will not attempt to do so. By the grace of God helping me, I will drink it only as His child. And even the bitterness in it gives me a worthier conception of the infinite love and pity of the Son of God, who chose for Himself, and drank during His whole life, a cup filled with incomparably more bitter ingredients than He has poured into mine, and He did this in order that (among other ends) He might be able perfectly to sympathise, through His infinite acquaintance with suffering, with every one of His suffering members. Then, I thought, Second, that this cup of mine, with all its bitterness, was the result of a consultation between

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It was deliberately settled, in infinite wisdom and love, that the only cup of healing which would fit a desperately diseased soul like mine, was a cup filled with all the bitterness which I was now tasting in it, and so, designedly and deliberately, the healing bitterness was placed in my cup, and there was neither more nor less of it than the necessity of the case demanded.

The Third consideration always affected me more. It was this. My cup, no doubt, had in it both sweet and bitter; spiritual sweet, and physical bitter. But, after all, this cup was not the one which originally was "MY CUP;" that cup was a bitter one, indeed, without a droplet of any sweet in it. It was a fearful cup, and to the drinker of it, it would have been better for him that he had never been born. It was the righteously deserved cup of God's indignation, filled to the brim with the wine of His wrath, and this poured into the cup, without any diluting mixture, to be drunk for ever and for ever (Rev. xiv. 10). But this frightful cup I never tasted, never even saw. Ere it was placed in my hands, Jesus, to spare me the drinking of it, laid hold of it, and drank it to the dregs. "At one vast draught of love, He drank hell dry,"



as old Ralph Erskine says. The drinking of this cup cost Him His life, and now, raised from the dead, He has, in THE SAME LOVE which led Him to drink the cup of horrors, mixed up this present cup, specially devised for my healing, and has brought it to me, and has blessed it before putting it into my hand. And when I think of the other cup, "MY RIGHTFUL CUP," which He did not give me, but drank it Himself instead, what can I say but "The cup which my FATHER has mingled for ME, (and which my SAVIOUR has brought to me and blessed), shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11).

Though my cup had in it some bitterness, yet, when Jesus brought it to me, He brought along with it a perfect corrective. If I might put what I want to say into the form of a parable, I might state it thus. When the gracious Lord laid the cup before me, He laid down beside it on the table three small packets of powders. He did not put these into the cup. I must do that with my own hand. But He told me that these powders had power to take away the bitter taste, according to the amount introduced into the cup. If I put in little the bitterness would be little affected; if I put in more, the bitterness would be more diminished; but if I emptied the packets into the cup, all trace

of the bitterness would be gone, at least for that draught, for the cup was to be drunk many times. But I told Him I could scarcely afford to use them so lavishly, for if I used them all up to-day, there would be none left for to-morrow. He smiled, and said, "Take no anxious thought for the morrow;" perhaps you may have no to-morrow here. But whether or not, these powders are not of this world, all the things of which perish in the using; they belong to the heavenlies, all the things of which multiply the more they are used. And He left me. So I emptied the three packets into the cup, and on drinking found that the bitterness was all gone. And when I looked at the emptied wrappers, they were as full as before, and there was inscribed on the packets the names—"Simple Faith," "Fervent Love," and "Deep Humility."

But I must draw to a close, and will merely refer to two other considerations without dwelling on them—viz., A deeper consciousness of SIN, with an increasing desire to be delivered from it at every cost. Desperate diseases need sharp remedies. And again, the delightful consciousness that the severe medicine was actually made efficacious. The Physician was adding His blessing to the cup He had mixed. And these considerations, and the

practical application of them to myself, made me doubt whether, after all, any other cup on earth was sweeter than my own. Oh, my brother, Christ's gentle tenderness is inconceivable; it is a benefit to be so circumstanced that one cannot get on at all without MUCH of it. "He tempers the wind," as the proverb says, "to the shorn lamb," or, in the better words of Scripture: "As one whom his mother comforts," so doth He kiss away the tears, and bind up the sores of His suffering little ones.

I am dissatisfied with this scribble, but I like to babble to you; much as one might have done when talking face to face. But it is no babble, my beloved brother, when I say that I love you very dearly, and that I have a warm sense of your great kindness on my heart.—Ever affectionately yours,

JOHN DICKIE.



### Letter No. 80.

"TO THEM THAT HAVE NO MIGHT HE INCREASETH  
STRENGTH."

Irvine, 24th October, 1890.

My dearly beloved Brother,—I thank you with all my heart for your kind letter, and its interesting contents. I am delighted to hear of your work, and to see that you seem to be able for it.

May God, our Father, strengthen you with all needed might, both in the inner and the outer man, for the discharge of the ministry intrusted to you ; and may He add His blessing to what you are doing.

It gives me great pleasure, my brother, to think that while I am laid up here in considerable pain and sickness, with much weakness, DOING NOTHING, and able to do nothing, you, and many many others, are enjoying a fair measure of health, and are able to work for Him in His vineyard. All these years I have often felt it a minor alleviation of my own troubles, to think of the great numbers who were enjoying what had been withdrawn from me ; and to lift up my heart, that God's goodness to them in these respects might be truly blessed to them. And I think this to be a very legitimate ground for rejoicing. It is, indeed, not the highest, but it is one of them ; and I feel assured that the Lord approves of our making use of it, from the gladness with which He has oft-times filled my heart, when I tried to thank Him for His goodness to others.

I have been feeling frailer of late, though able to get out of bed to the chair every afternoon. I lost a little by my going out in August, the stairs, even with help, were too much ; and the loss increases, probably on account of the season of the

year. I have not been out of my garret since seeing you. But it is idle to think of secondary causes (except for the sake of discovering sometimes what the will of the Lord is), the one grand consideration which keeps the soul in peace is this : "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

ALL things are good for us, WHATEVER He sends. He has chosen it for us in perfect wisdom, and sent it to us in the same fulness of love which gave us His Beloved Son. It is our good, our highest good, which alone He aims at. I desire, then, in the unwavering assurance that it is so, to say, whatever may be the external circumstances of my appointed lot, "It is all well; nay, it could not have been better than it is; and, though I cannot, in the least, trace the workings of His wonderful hand, I can fearlessly trust Him with every interest; and now, with all my heart, I thank Him for sending me what He has now sent." And here lies the peace that passes all understanding.

But, though it be delightfully true that whatever God sends to us, be it health or sickness, outward comfort or outward trouble, is sent only for our good, yet it shall really work out good to us, only as, in the use of it, we use and enjoy it in communion with Him. The poverty and sufferings

of Lazarus on the pavement among the street dogs worked only for his good ; while the health and abundance of Dives in his mansion brought him only evil. Health and comforts are not true blessings in themselves, as we see in myriads of cases everywhere around ; and just as little is disease and poverty a true blessing, as we see in quite as many cases everywhere. We may settle it therefore in our minds, that, when God withholds or withdraws any outward mercy from us, the possession of it was not for our benefit, else He who delighteth in the prosperity of His servants would neither have withheld nor withdrawn it. But the very lack of the thing shall be a most enriching good to us, if it sends us with an intenser hunger of heart to seek and find our EVERYTHING in God's grace through Christ.

I resume my scribble after resting a bit, and during the interval I have been cheered by the words of Isaiah, " To them that have no might, He increaseth strength." It is the perfectly impotent whom ALONE He makes strong, for His strength is made perfect only in the weakness of the creature, so that we are brought to say with Paul " For, WHEN I am weak, THEN am I strong " (2 Cor. xii. 9-11). We may, then, be too strong for our own true blessedness or service ; but we never, never

can be too weak for either if, in our uttermost helplessness, we cast ourselves for every needed succour on the bosom of the Almighty love. The strong man, the half-strong, He leaves to his fancied strength ; the case is not yet ripe for His gracious interference. He leaves all such, like Abraham, till, in their idle efforts, all their strength is wasted, and they are become " as good as dead." And now, when all strength is gone, and they are brought to feel that they are at their wits' end, then is the time for which God has been waiting to be gracious ; and so He steps in, and to him who is now consciously destitute of all might, He increaseth strength. He makes the weak one as David ; and He does not halt there, for He makes the man, now David-like, a very angel in his strength.

Thank you, my beloved brother, for your telling me of your conference, and for giving me the joy and privilege of joining with you to the small extent of asking Divine guidance and blessing on it. I am so thankful to be permitted. It seems such a very small thing, but then the Lord sees me to be fit for nothing greater. And what a sad thing it would be to permit one's-self to slight or neglect a so-called small duty or privilege because it was thought to be small ! There is no duty so small that the per-



fect discharge of it will not tax to the uttermost all the energies of the most gifted saint ; and, after all, he will feel constrained to cast himself in the dust before his Lord, and confess that he is but an “unprofitable servant.” He has nothing of the true servant-spirit, who fancies anything to which the Lord calls him a small matter.

I pray God to bestow on me the utmost measure which I am capable of receiving of the spirit of a true intercessor, one who is called and set apart among the small band whom the prophet speaks of as the “Lord’s remembrancers” (Isa. lxii. 6, margin). Looking back on my life, I can see no places in it more beautifully radiant with the sunshine of heaven than those favoured moments when one had the felt help of the Holy Spirit, to pour out one’s soul in groanings unutterable for some beloved person or object. Oh, if such moments are not heaven, surely they are on the confines of the happy land !

And it is very delightful, too, to know that some one, besides myself, is praying for me, if the praying man be one of the “Lord’s remembrancers.” He prays because the Lord has stirred him up to pray for me ; and shall not He, who has stirred up my brother to pray on my behalf on earth, not be sure to present these petitions of his in heaven ?



Let us, then, assign its proper value to this unspeakable blessing of brotherly intercession; and let us, like Paul, ask it from beloved and trusted ones. A Christian man has no gift to give that is half so precious as his prayers. And I desire also grace to agonise for all saints and for all men (Eph. vi. 18 ; 1 Tim. ii. 1).

Is there not reason to fear that the place and power of true intercession is not clearly recognised even by genuine saints; that it is rare and feeble when compared with the prayers offered for one's-self? If so, it must be because, even in Christians, selfishness is so imperfectly crucified, and love so little occupies the entire man. With pure and perfect love reigning, and selfishness held in subjection, intercessory prayer would be the form in which the spirit of prayer would naturally manifest itself, while personal prayer would be only secondary. Of course, we can scarcely expect to reach this perfection of love here; but the further we advance in Christ-likeness, we shall come the nearer to it. Christ's own prayers are now all intercessory, and in the days of His flesh they were very largely so. And I am struck with Paul's prayers, referred to in his Epistles, to how large an extent were they intercessory.

I have wearied you, my brother, with my pointless chatter, but you will kindly forgive me. I

don't know whether I ever felt it so difficult to get through a letter to you. My stupidity is very dense. It is HIS will; and with all my heart I welcome it. And His will shall grant me the only release I look for, when His good time is come; and to that will also, I trust Him to enable me to say, "Amen; good is the will of the Lord."

I had the great pleasure of receiving a little book this morning from dear Mr. B——. I have not got it looked into yet.

With warmest love, and commending you, and your service, to the care of our Heavenly Father, I remain, my dearly beloved brother, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN DICKIE.



## Letter No. 81.

FAREWELL.

Irvine, December, 1890.

Dearly beloved,—Since getting your very kind note, I have been longing to reply to it, but have been hindered. And this mere note must be brief.

I hear our Father's voice, calling me home, and it is very, very welcome to me. There is nothing which I would more gladly do, than, AT HIS BIDDING, turn my face to the wall and die.

Dying is not hard or sorrowful work, when one

has got nothing else to do but only to DIE ; but it must be very hard, and very sorrowful, when, besides dying, the distracted soul has to overtake the neglected arrears of perhaps half a life-time.

The Lord is very gracious, and gentle with me, in regard to EVERYTHING. Will you help me to thank Him for this ?

The ailment which He is using to set me free is enlargement of liver and dropsy. What I suffer most from is an almost entire incapacity in the stomach to take any sort of food. But all this is part of His wise and loving plan.

As a guilty, a most guilty sinner, I can get rest only in the free, free, free, and infinite love of God, through the precious blood of Jesus.

And now farewell, my beloved brother, we shall meet in a little. I want to thank you, oh, how heartily, for all your kindness to your unworthy brother ; and I commend yourself, and your work to our Heavenly Father's loving care.

But I must pause. If you see beloved Mr. B—— or Mr. P—— or any of my kind friends in Dublin, assure them of my warmest love in Jesus. Farewell once more, with my dying, yet undying love.

Yours in the oneness of the Christian unity.

JOHN DICKIE.

## THE DYING SAINT.

“The day of death is better than the day of one’s birth.”—

ECCLES. vii. 1.

- “OH, tell me no more about earth,  
I wish to have done with it all ;  
Its bustle, its business, its sorrows, its mirth,  
On mine ears with strange weariness fall.
- “But speak of my own home above,  
And speak of the grace of my Lord ;  
Repeat His sweet breathings of mercy and love,  
There’s music like heaven’s in each word.
- “Come over-and-over His name—  
The sound sends a thrill through my soul ;  
It blows up the heat of my rapture to flame,  
With an ardour I cannot control.
- “My soul groweth faint to behold  
The King in His beauty on high ;  
With longing and looking mine eye waxeth old,  
And with crying my throat’s become dry.
- “Nay ; hush now, and tell me no more,  
The gladness is breaking my heart—  
A gladness which scarcely I’ve tasted before :  
Almost faint with the joy I depart.
- “’Tis death ; for I cannot bear this,  
The rapture is rending my clay ;  
He taketh my soul to Himself with a kiss :  
Fare ye well, for I hasten away.
- “Oh, would I could speak what I see !  
The glory no mortal could tell ;  
HE calls, and the sound of His voice sets me free .  
Fare ye well, for a little, farewell !”

J. D.

---







